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Po' White Trash
AND OTHER
One-Act Dramas
by
EVELYN GREENLEAF SUTHERLAND





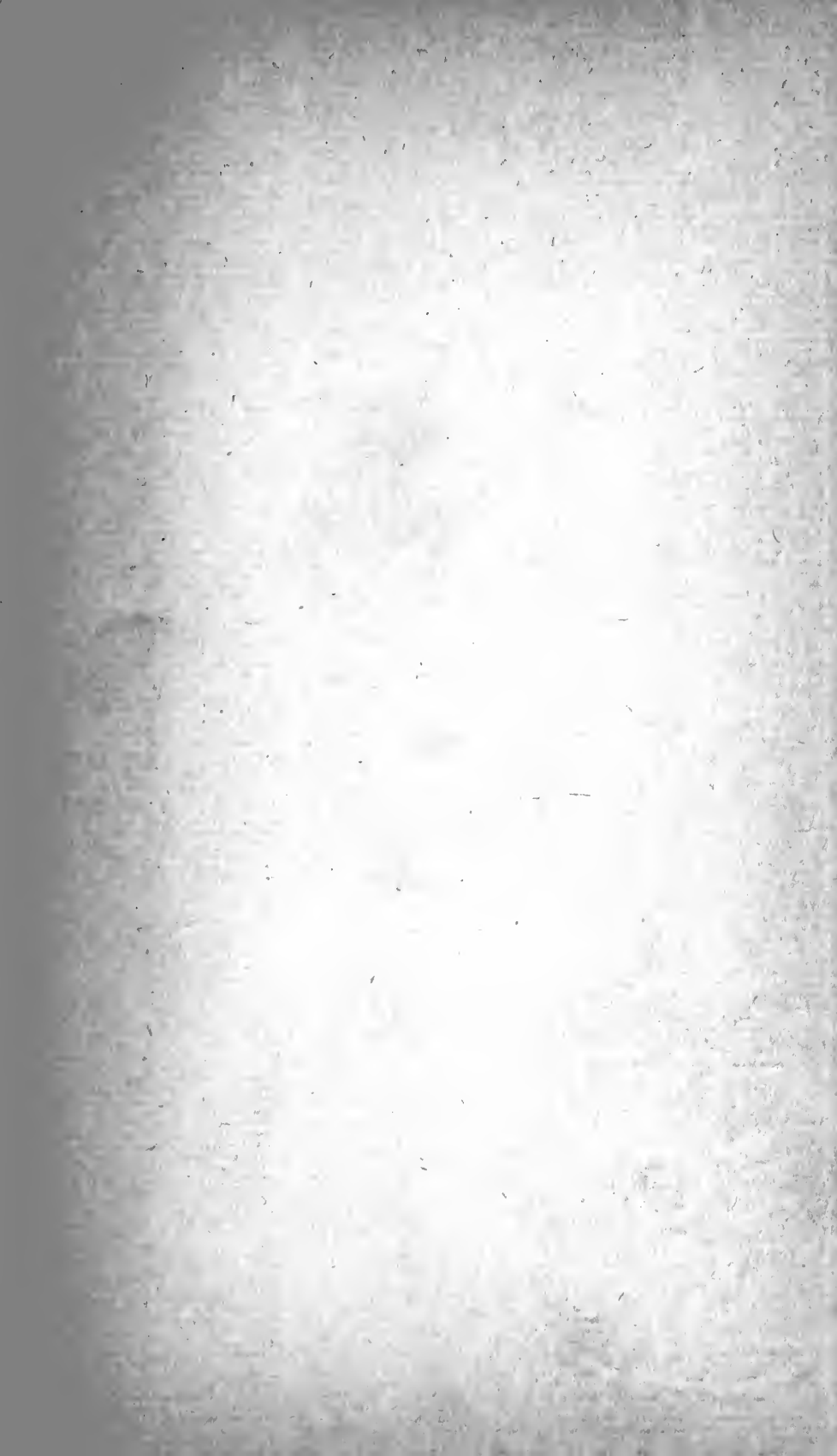
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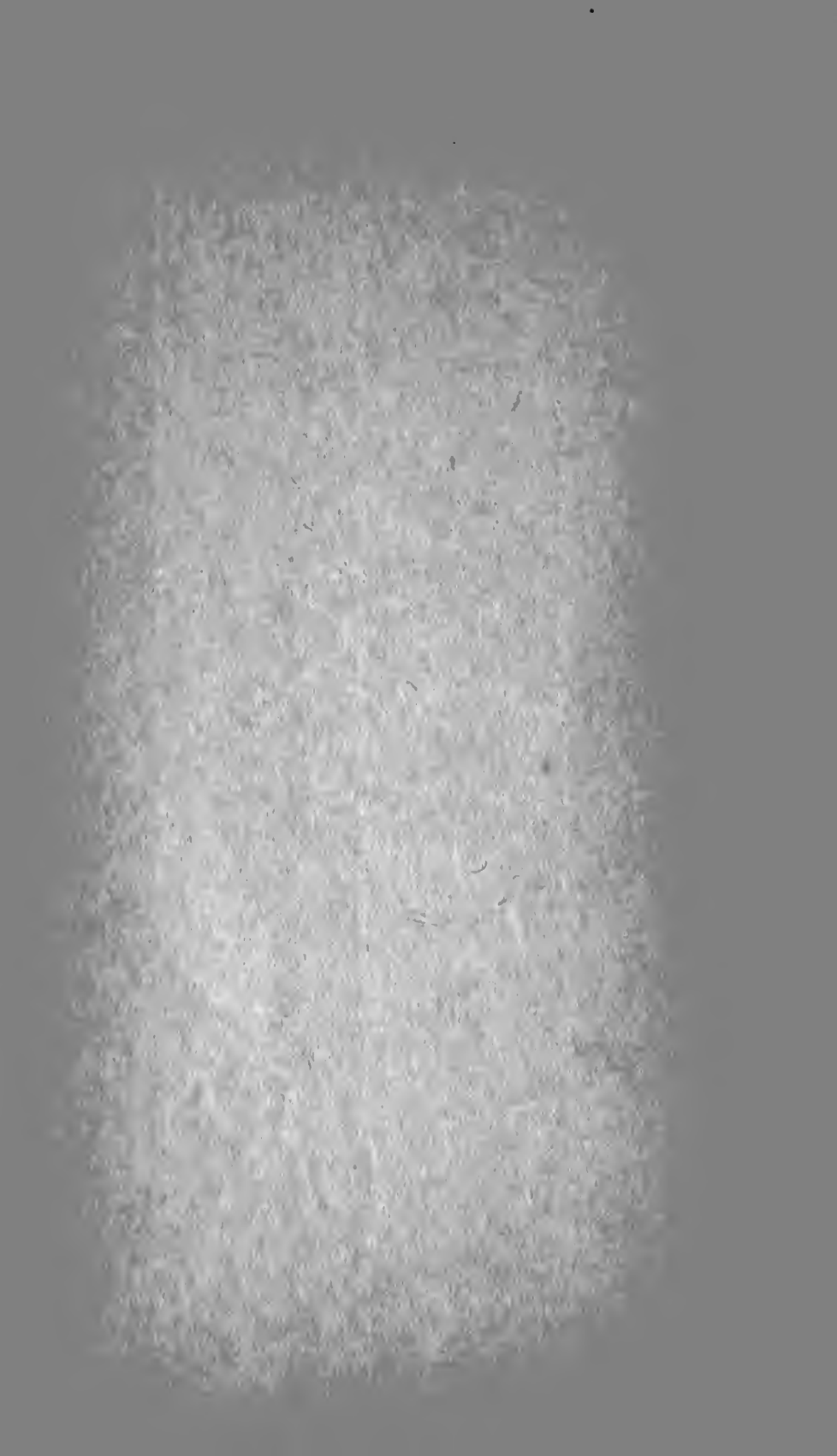
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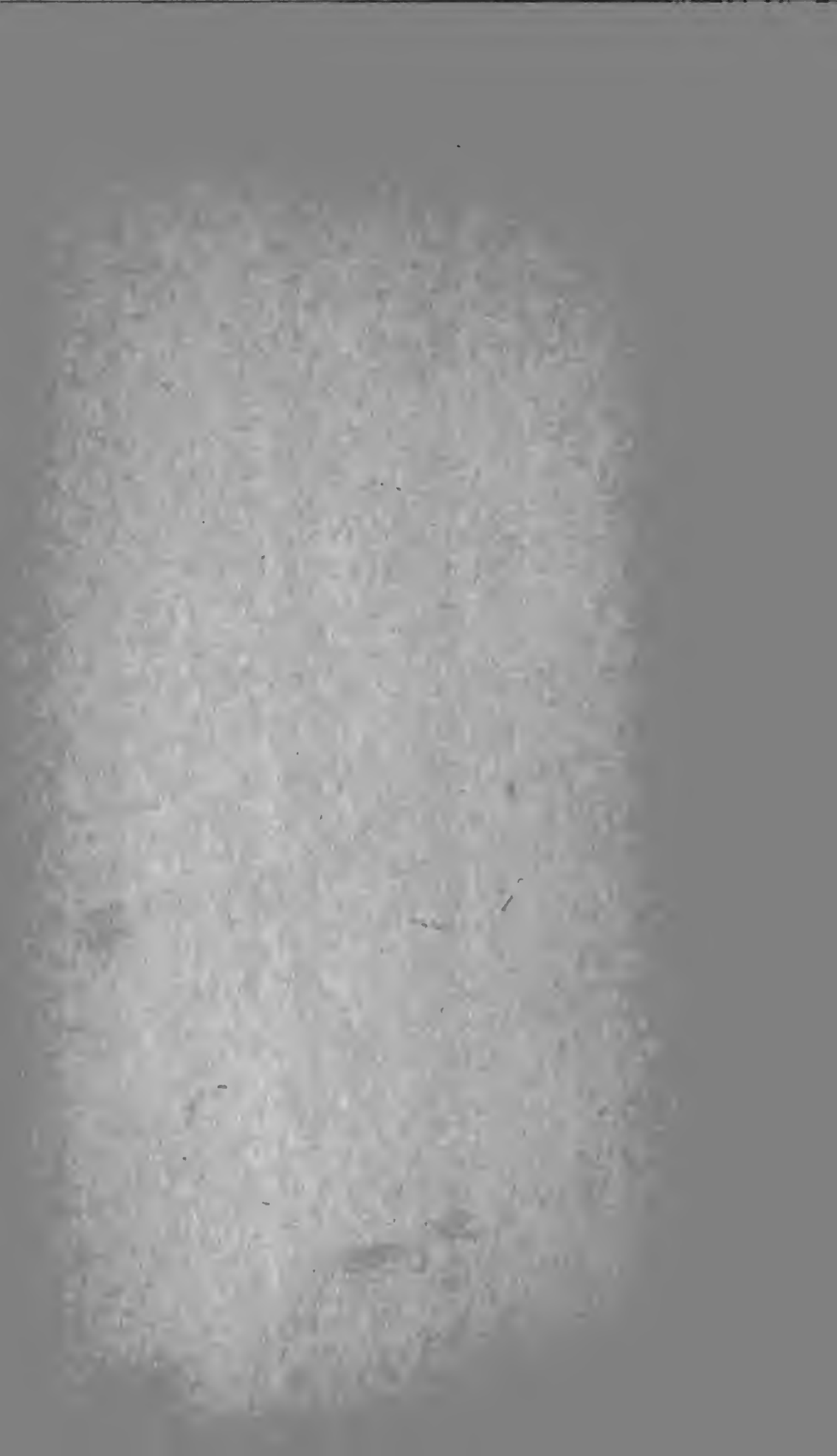
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PO' WHITE TRASH AND
OTHER ONE-ACT DRAMAS

PO' WHITE TRASH

AND OTHER

One-Act Dramas

BY

EVELYN GREENLEAF SUTHERLAND

11

CERTAIN OF THE PLAYS BEING WRITTEN IN
COLLABORATION WITH EMMA SHERIDAN-
FRY AND PERCY WALLACE MACKAYE



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TO
JOHN PRESTON SUTHERLAND

"WHO MADE THE HAPPY SUN-
SHINE WHERE THESE GREW"

THEY ARE DEDICATED

BY
HIS WIFE.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

JOHN BURNET

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

IN TWO VOLUMES

LONDON

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1724

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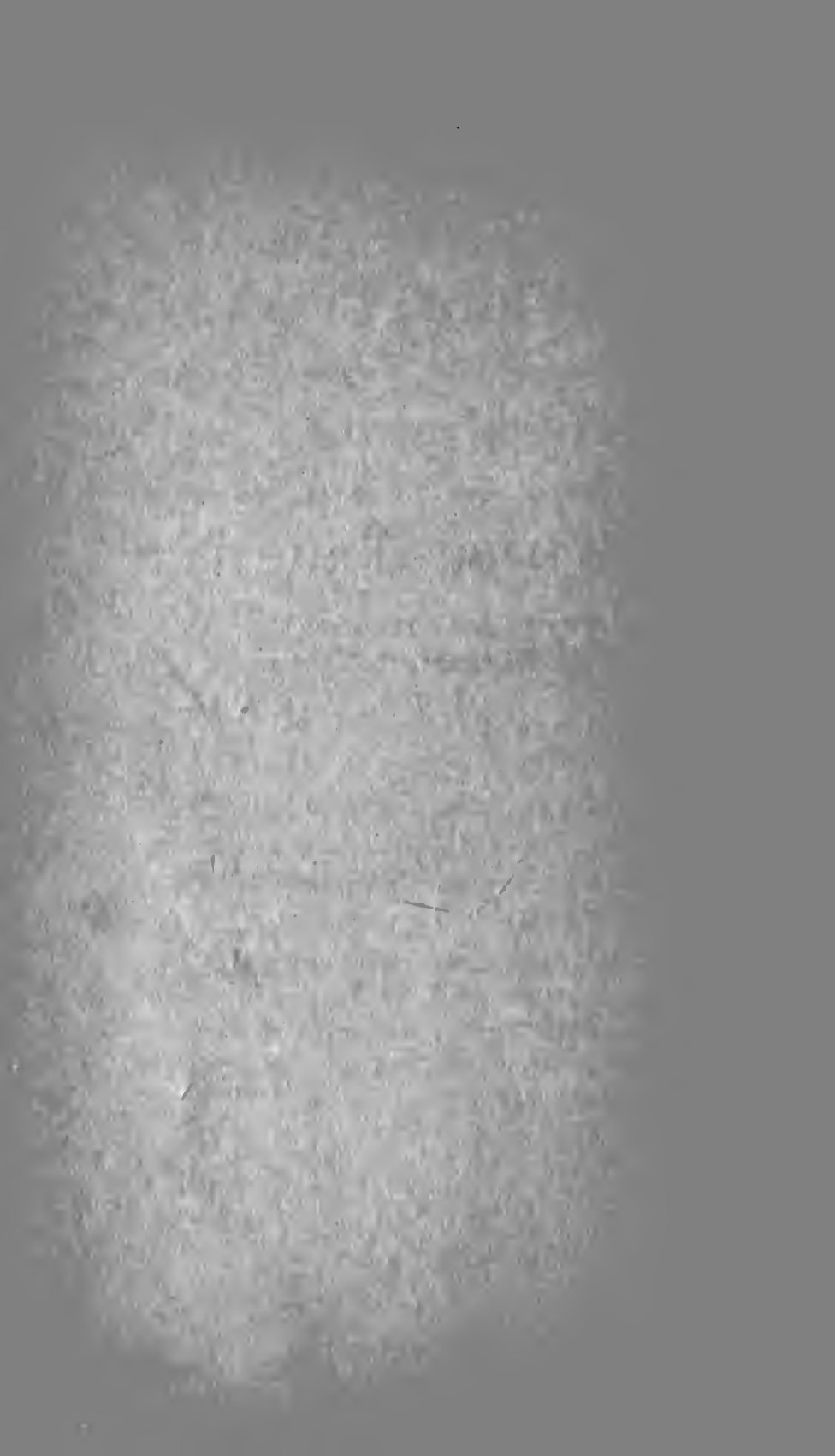
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PO' WHITE TRASH

A STUDY OF A LITTLE-KNOWN
PHASE OF AMERICAN LIFE



Po' White Trash

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SUKE DURY (of the class known as "po' white trash").

DRENT DURY (her nephew).

JUDGE PAGE.

DR. CALHOUN PAYNE.

CAROL PAYNE (his daughter).

SAL HANKERS.

ZEP POON }
MILLY } Negroes.

The place is Georgia. The period is the present. The scene is the exterior of Suke Dury's cabin, on the edge of Oloochee Swamp. The time is late afternoon of a mid-July day.

The scene is a dilapidated cabin exterior. The cabin is set at an angle, R. 4. It is of logs, with a clay chimney; a single window with a broken shutter, half open. In front of it, a rude platform-like

piazza. A rude bench on stage; in front of it, toward R. 2. A banjo is lying on the bench. The stage is covered with a whitish-yellow cloth, representing bare sand. The back drop a stretch of flat sand, dotted with clumps of coarse green grass; here and there, a tall, dead, fire-blackened tree. At L. 3, a mast-like, blackened tree-trunk, draped heavily with moss. Behind it, there is a narrow path, apparently ending with the swamp. From L. of stage, extending into wings, a thick matted undergrowth of lush, green, swamp-like bushes and plants, growing taller as they join wings. The light is hot, intense, yellow sunlight; almost from rise of curtain, however, the light begins to soften toward dusk; first growing red, then lilac, then clear violet-purple, then dark purple, etc. In front of cabin piazza, R. 3, a small iron pot, full of red coals and with a branding iron stuck down into it. Curtain music, "Swanee River." When curtain rises, Zep Poon is soundly asleep under tree, L. 3. He is a burly negro, intensely black; in cotton-checked shirt, open at neck; cotton overalls, brogans, above which his naked black ankles show. Beside him is his broad-brimmed, tattered straw hat. In the silence the locusts are heard, intermittently shrilling. After a second or two, Zep snores heavily, once or twice, and turns on his side, without waking; then snores again. Enter Sal Hankers, from road behind cabin, R. back. She

is dressed in gaudy, cheap calico; her dress being apparently her only garment. Her face and hair are of a uniform clay-color. She carries her sun-bonnet dangling from its string on her arm. As she comes down, she glances indifferently at Zep. She seats herself leisurely on bench, R. She takes from her pocket a snuff-box and a stick, and dips the stick into the box, afterward rubbing it on her teeth. After a pause.

SAL. Suke! O Suke!

(There is again silence. Sal fans herself and wipes her face upon her apron. The locusts shrill again and Zep snores.)

SAL. Suke! O Suke Dury! O Suke!

(Suke Dury opens door of cabin, and stands framed in it. She is of Sal's type, but much more vivid. Her hair is of deep red. She has a rope in her hand, whose broken ends she is knotting together.)

SUKE. Save yo' breath. I heard yo'. But the calf had split his rope to frazzles an' was makin' fo' the swamp, an' I had to ketch him. Swamps ain't safe pasturin' for calves.

SAL. (R.) Ain't safe pasturin' for nobody, when such a sun nusses copperheads lively. Look at that fool nigger! (Indicates Zep.) Snorin' there on the edge of Oloochee Swamp as if snakes wuz as friendly

company as skeeters. Ah reckon if a copperhead cam' out a-visitin', that nigger wouldn't never have the trouble of wakin' up.

SUKE. (*Comes down C.*) Copperheads don't come a-visitin' here. Too much sense. It 'ud be a safe thing fo' all sorts o' snakes, ef they'd alwuz kep' thar distance from this cabin.

SAL. Reckon the swamp things 'lowed this cabin wuz theirn by right o' squattin'. Plumb twenty years they hed it to theirselves, while you 'uns was yon, in the mountains, an' the cabin shet.

SUKE. Twenty years come August. It wor sun-up, nineteen year ago, that my sister Pen an' I locked that cabin do' behin' us. It wor sun-up, when my sister Pen's boy an' I opened that do' a month ago. But the swamp things hev hed a chance to study on one thing sence we're back again,—an' that is, whar Suke Dury bides no kind o' snake don't find it healthy. *All* the snakes in Georgia ain't learnt that yit; but they will;—they will;—give me time.

SAL. Doctor been here yet?

SUKE. What *d'yo'* know 'bout Doctor's comin'?

SAL. O Luddy! Luddy! But yo' *be* a wild cat! 'Twuz Miss Carol told me yo' asked her paw to drap in on Drent when he was a-passin'. Drent po'ly?

SUKE. (*C.*) I don' know. But I'm feared o' him. Gord! He's too like his maw! He's too like his maw! She went sudden, yo' know, my sister Pen.

One day she said, "Suke, I've got a mis'ry in my side!"—an her face went gray as that moss. . . . Next day,—we buried her.

SAL. (*R.*) Drent ben a-havin' a miz'ry?

SUKE. He don' say so. But las' week, one day he'd been a-singin' for Miss Carol, he come into the cabin,—an' his face hit went all gray,—gray as that moss, gray as—God-a-mighty! I thought 'twuz my heart a-stoppin' 'stid o' his. So I asked Miss Carol would she ask her paw to look at Drent, when he wuz a-passin'.

SAL. Folks say as daddyless young 'uns is most always death-struck young.

SUKE. Who's sayin' daddyless young 'uns? Yo' chitterin' fool! Who——

SAL. (*Rises and ties on bonnet very deliberately.*) Thar ye be, wild-cattin' agin! I'm moughty puzzled, yo' sister Pen's heart didn't stop fo' it did, with yo' wild-cattin' round from sun-up twell dark. Daddyless young 'uns? D'ye spose folks has forgot when you-all clared out, nineteen year ago, yo' sister Pen kerried a daddyless young 'un with her? (*Crosses toward L.*) What of it? Happens to plenty! Po' white trash hasn't no business with sech eyes as Pen Dury's were,—eyes big an' trustin' as a baby calf's!

SUKE. Ef I don' *kill* yo', it's because I've got somebody else to settle with first! (*Suke turns in to cabin.*)

SAL. Quit wild-cattin'! Suke! O Suke! Tell Dr. Payne ef he be so bleegin' as to stop up on my ol' man, when he's passin' home? My ol' man he said Jim Wash was a liar, yestiddy; an' Jim Wash'll be at the sto' to-day, when my ol' man gits thar. I reckon my ol' man'll be needin' the doctor moughty bad, after he's met up with Jim Wash!

(Sal turns to exit as she came, behind cabin, R. back; she comes violently into contact with Milly, who is just entering. Suke turns at the collision and Milly's noisy exclamations. Milly is a very black young negress, neatly dressed, and wearing a notably pretty and fashionable hat.)

MILLY. Name o' Jerusalem! Huccum yo' knock de bruf out'n a pusson dat-a-way!

(Exit Suke into cabin.)

SAL. Yo' breath'll last longer, ef yo' keep out'n yo' betters' way!

MILLY. Betters! *(Exit Sal. Milly backs down stage, calling after her.)* Name o' Palestine! Betters! Talkin' to a quality nigger dat po' white trash wuz her betters! Po' white trash! *(As she backs, she stumbles over Zep, who sits up, rubbing his head bewilderedly.)* Name o' glory! Jordan am

a hard road to trabbel dis ebenin' for sho'! Huccum dat——

ZEP. (*Striking out viciously.*) Git out o' this, yo' dog-gone ol' mule!

MILLY. (*Dodging blow.*) Mule!

ZEP. (*Struggling to his feet and bowing and ducking obsequiously, with flourishes of his hat.*) O, Miss Carol, I done ax yo' pardon. I done reckoned my ol' mule wuz kickin' me to wake up, lak he do, when he done——

MILLY. Fus' de mule, an' den Miss Carol! Habn't yo' no eyes, yo' fool nigger Zep Poon, or have de sun done scotched 'em out?

ZEP. (*Dazed.*) Dat ar Miss Carol's hat! I done swar dat ar Miss Carol's hat! Huccum Miss Carol she done ain't under dat hat?

MILLY. Miss Carol she'll nebber be under dat hat no mo'. Miss Carol done gib me dat hat fo' a plightin' gif'!

ZEP. Plightin' gif'! *Yo'!* Name ob Israel! Ef yo done gone plight yo'self——(*Takes out razor from overalls.*)

MILLY. Yo' done gone crunkled! 'Tain't me wot's plighted. But ef 'twuz me 'twouldn't be to no nigger dat don' know me from a mule! Miss Carol's done plighted——

ZEP. It's Marsr George Payne! It's de Jedge's son! I ben a-studyin' huccome Marsr George done

quit coon-huntin' Sundays! He done gone huntin' 'nother kind o' coon! (*Chuckles.*) Well, I's done, fo' a fac'!

MILLY. Ya'as. Miss Carol she done come to de Jedge's to-day, fo' Marse George to show her to we-all; and all de quality done be bid to the Jedge's this ebenin', and dere'll be de bigges' doin's, and de bigges' dancin', an' de bigges' singin', and de bigges' eatin' an' de bigges' drinkin'——

ZEP. (*Mechanically echoing her ecstatic tone.*) De bigges' eatin', and de bigges' drinkin', an'—'pears like ter me de Jedge done say I wuz to go up to de place dis day. Ya'as; de Jedge he sutney did say——

MILLY. Ya'as, he sutney did say go to the place an' clean de well; an' whar's de well? An' whar wuz yo'? Look at yo'! An' it's plumb sundown! Clean de well!

ZEP. De Jedge done know hit my day fer plowin'!

MILLY. Day fo' plowin'! Day fo' snorin'! I done hyerd de Jedge cussin' 'bout dat well, this ebenin' after dinner. He done say yo' hadn't done no wuk fo' a week, an' he done 'fraid yo' done got 'ligion!

(Suke enters from cabin and stands looking out toward the swamp, shading her eyes with her hand.)

ZEP. Got 'ligion! Name o' de Lawd! Got 'ligion befo' Christmas! I——

SUKE. Hold your tongues!

(There is a pause of a second.)

SUKE. Wuzn't that my boy Drent's whistle off yon, in de swamp?

(Another pause; a soft, flute-like tremulo whistle comes faintly from the direction of the swamp.)

MILLY. I reckon, Suke,—

SUKE. Dury's my name—to niggers!

(Milly tosses her head and moves toward back L.)

ZEP. *(With a flourishing bow.)* I reckon, Miss Dury, dat wuzn't Drent. Reckon 'twuz a mockin' bird. Moughty puzzlin' fo' sho' to tell Drent f'om a mockin' bird when he's whistlin'; an' when Drent sing, it's moughty puzzlin' fo' to tell him f'om a angel!

MILLY. *(Turning.)* Ya'as. I reckon dat's why Miss Carol she sent me fo' to fetch Drent to de Jedge's place dis ebenin' fo' to sing fo' de quality.

SUKE. Carol Payne sent yo' to fetch my boy to go up an' sing for quality folks,—up to the Jedge's, whar she's a-visitin'?

MILLY. *(With a mock curtsey.)* Dat's hit, Miss Dury!

SUKE. Then tote yo'self back an' tell Miss Carol w'en she wants Drent Dury to sing fo' her, she carn't send no niggers—she kin com herself! Tell her I said so! (*Exit into cabin.*)

MILLY. De sassiness ob po' white trash——

(*Dr. Payne enters from behind cabin, R. back. He is fat and jovial; he carries his saddle-bags across his arm.*)

DR. P. An' the impudence o' niggers! Gloryin' round in that hat I paid fo'teen good dollars fo', down in Atlanta!

(*Exit Milly, bridling, L. back. Dr. P. seats himself on bench, puffing and blowing; tosses down his saddle-bags; fans himself with Panama hat. Zep approaches him, bowing and scraping.*)

DR. P. Lucky it's dusking down! Plaggon it! If that sun had stayed up much longer, I should have had to be taken home in one of my own bottles! (*Noticing Zep.*) Well, well, what do *you* want, confound you?

ZEP. Ya'as sah. Please Doctor, sah, ef yo' could give me a little sumpin' for a pow'ful po'ly feelin'——

DR. P. What is it, eh. A miz'ry in yo' back, or a sinkin' in yo' head, or a conjure all over yo'? Speak out!

ZEP. Ef yo' please, Doctor, sah, I'se been sufferin' pow'ful dese days, wid water on my stomach, sah!

DR. P. Water on yo' stomach, eh?—water on—
(*Bursts into chuckling laughter.*) Well, it must be sufferin', fo' a fac', to introduce water to a stomach tanned with tanglefoot whisky!—Here!
(*Fumbles in pocket and tosses him a coin.*) That's the prescription you're after, I reckon, eh?

ZEP. De Lawd bless an' fumigate yo', Marsr Doctor, sah,—de Lawd bless an' fumigate yo'!

(*Exit Zep behind cabin, back R.*)

DR. P. Well, with niggers an' po' white trash, a doctor does have a cheerful time, fo' a fac'! . . . What's that Drent Dury a-doin', keepin' me waitin'? O! Drent Dury! O Drent!

(*Suke enters from cabin.*)

SUKE. Drent ain't hyar, Doctor Payne, sir. I'm done heart-sick that he don' come, sir, not since last night.

DR. P. Ain't here? Sends fo' a doctor, an' ain't here? Well, fo' a fac'——!

(*Rises in wrath and begins to pick up his saddle-bags.*)

SUKE. O ef yo' please, Dr. Payne, sir! Drent he must be home right soon. He's——

DR. P. He's a worthless young nubbin'—that's what Drent Dury is! Wants a doctor, does he?—What fo'? Not his lungs, I'll swear! Didn't I hear him singin' las' night, passin' out a-coon-huntin',—singin' like a low-down, dirty, no 'count little—little cherubim and seraphim? Singin' like—(*Drent's voice is heard outside singing the first verse of "My Old Kentucky Home."*)—singin' like—that, confound him! Now who'd say that a busy doctor'd be fool enough to waste his time——

(Drent enters. He is dressed in ragged brown jean trousers, a dull blue shirt, open at the throat, and a ragged hat. He carries a shot-gun. A dilapidated game-bag is slung across him. He moves listlessly and is pale.)

DR. P. ——Fool enough to waste his time huntin' up——

DRENT. Why, I reckon anybody'd say so, that knowed yo', Doctor.

(Suke goes down to meet Drent. Under pretense of taking off his game-bag to examine it for game, she caresses him, with awkward tenderness.)

SUKE. Made up yo' mind to steer in for some vittles at last, did yo', yo' louty young vagabond? (*Holds up game-bag.*) Empty, I swar! Empty as

yo' fool head! (*She carries his gun and game-bag up to the porch. He sits on step of piazza, listless and sullen.*)

DR. P. That's a woman! That's a woman! Honin' her heart out for a fellow when he's off, and then givin' him the devil the minute he heaves in sight!

DRENT. (*To Suke.*) It's yo' own fault. Yo' know I'd stay away while that iron was heatin' thar. I'm no butcher an' no calf-brander, an' I won't stay whar I'm hounded to do it.

SUKE. I'll do the brandin' then. (*Takes iron from pot.*) Yo've the heart of a calf yo'self! (*Exit behind cabin.*)

DRENT. Mebbe. An' mebbe the skin of a calf; an' mebbe that's how I kin guess how a brandin' iron feels.

DR. P. Dut yo' don't know how a coon feels, eh?

DRENT. Don't I?

DR. P. Well, yo' shoot 'em, all th' same.

DRENT. Do I? Whar's the coon, Doctor?
(*Shows empty game-bag.*)

DR. P. Didn't see a coon, then, eh?

DRENT. O, I saw a coon, right enuf!

DR. P. Too lazy to hunt him, then, eh?

DRENT. Hunt him? Hunt?—O! Name o' judgment. (*Bursts into a long, low, lazy laugh.*) Hunt! Doctor, there isn't one of the boys that went coon-

huntin' las' night, that ken set down after he's got up, or git up after he's set down! Land! I reckon the boys'll remember last night's hunt! 'Twuz the sort o' a hunt they wouldn't a-got out'n any coon but me! (*Laughs again.*)

DR. P. Any coon but—— You're going loony! (*Sits on piazza.*)

DRENT. P'raps you'll say loony, Doctor, fo' a fac', when I've told yo'. It wuz this-a-way. Me an' Frazzles,—Frazzles is my dog, yo' know, Doctor, jes' an ornery no-'count yeller dog like me,—but he kin foller his master; an' when he's tol' to hol' on, dat dog he don' let go. Well, me and Frazzles wuz way ahead o' the other dogs, an' we see the moss on an old pine swing—swing—lak the wind struck it; but there warn't no wind. An' I says to Frazzles, "Sh!" an' he sh'd. An' we crep' along—still as a copper-head creeps—crep' and crep' along to that there tree; an' Frazzles' eyes got bigger an' yallerer, an' his back jes' quivered lak as if every hair hed come alive, but Frazzles never yipped a yip. . . . An' we crep'—an' we come to the ol' pine—an' we peeked up through the moss,—and thar was the coon. Lord! Doctor,—thar was the coon,—crouchin' and scroughlin' together, dead sick with the smell o' the dog,—a-crouchin' an' a-scroughlin' an' a-lookin'—an' a-lookin' . . . An' Frazzles says,—'ithout ever yippin' a yip—"Throw him down!—throw him down!"—An'

I says, "You bet!"—And I shinned up that tree, a-grippin' my gun—an' I got on the branch fair below him,—and then——

DR. P. Well! Well! And then——

DRENT. An' then, Doctor, I saw that coon's eyes.—I saw that coon's eyes. Doctor, I—I never saw a coon's eyes befo'. I reckon—I reckon—thar wouldn't be so much hurtin' done in this world ef jes' befo' yo' hurted yo' saw the thing's eyes! An' I looked at him—an he looked at me,—an' his eyes said, "Be yo' goin' to kill me? Be yo' goin' to kill me?" Thar worn't no trees—no sky—no nothin'—jes' only that coon's eyes. "It's on'y cowards kill what can't fight," they says. "It's on'y devils kill fo' fun," they says. Everythin' thet hed ever been 'fraid—an' I've been 'fraid!—looked out o' that coon's eyes. Everythin' thet hed ever got beat,—an' I've got beat!—looked out of that coon's eyes. Everythin' that ever been hurt,—and God-a-mighty! I've been hurt!—looked out of that coon's eyes. "Be ye goin' to kill me?" they sez. "Be ye goin' to kill me?" An' I flinged my gun's far's she'd flew, an' I sez, "No, yo' mean, scared, hunted critter, yo'! I'll be damned if I kill yo'!"

DR. P. Yo' blamed little fool!

*(Dr. Payne wipes his eyes surreptitiously,
and blows his nose ostentatiously. Drent*

takes up his banjo and idly strums as he talks, some bars of "My Old Kentucky Home." Dr. Payne sways and beats time to it, unconsciously; stopping himself whenever he remembers it, with evident irritation; but occasionally, despite himself, humming a word or two of the song in a grumbling bass.)

DRENT. But yo' see, Doctor, the boys done hev to have their hunt; so, wal, Frazzles he done follo' me, coon or no coon; an' the other dogs, they done follo' Frazzles, scent or no scent; and the boys they done follow the dogs . . . an' they had huntin' a-plenty, Doctor, they did, fo' a fac'!

DR. P. And whar was the good of it all, you "possum an' de coon! possum an' de coon!" (*Humming words of song.*) Doggone it, will yo' stop that banjo? . . . Whar was the good——

DRENT. Good? Why, Doctor, the coon done got his life—an' the boys done got their hunt—an' I,—I done found out there was one thing on this yearth mizzibler than po' white trash!

DR. P. "By de meadow, de hill, and de——" (*Humming words of song.*) Damn it all, will you either quit that song or sing it?

(Drent sings, lightly and idly, but with searching pathos, the words:

*We'll hunt no mo' fo' de possum an' de coon,
By de medder, de hill an' de sho';
We'll sing no mo' by the light o' the moon
On de bench by de ol' cabin do';
De days go by, lak a shadow on de heart,
Wid sorrow whar once was delight;
The time hit come w'en ol' friends dey hev to part;
Den my ol' Kentucky home, good-night!)*

DR. P. (*Who has listened with much emotion.*)
Listen to yo'! Listen to yo'! With a voice that
pulls the mockin' birds out o' the swamp, and sets an
ol' fool doctor sloppin' over at both eyes! With a
voice that might make yo' the foremost citizen o'
Georgia, sir,—the foremost citizen o' Georgia! (*Ris-*
ing.) An' then look at yo'! Look at yo'! What
are yo', sir? What are yo'?

DRENT. Po' white trash, I reckon, Doctor,—jes
po' white trash!

DR. P. Po' white trash! When if yo' had one
blink of honest ambition, there isn't a man of us
wouldn't be proud to give yo' a leg up! When if
yo' had one ounce of man in yo', yo'd stand, in
three years, where nobody'd remember that yo' never
knew yo' daddy,—(*Drent starts, laying down his*
banjo) and nobody'd remember that yo' mother—

DRENT. (*Rising to his feet.*) Hold it there, ef
yo' please, Doctor. What my maw was, I reckon I

know better'n yo'; an' what my maw is, I reckon neither of us 'll ever know, unless we're better men!

DR. P. (*After a pause, impetuously gripping his hand.*) Dury, I ask yo' pardon!

DRENT. Never mind, Doctor. Of co'se there ain't nothin' po' white trash cayn't hear. Only I reckon—I reckon—thar's some things quality folks cayn't say.

(*He staggers dizzily for a moment, with his hand to his heart.*)

DR. P. (*Throwing his arm around Drent.*) What are yo' at, boy? What's wrong?

DRENT. (*Releasing himself and laughing confusedly.*) Aw, nothin', Doctor, nothin'! Only fo' one fool minute everythin' seemed duskin'—an' stoppin'—but I'm all right now—all right. (*Takes up banjo and tremulously tunes it.*)

DR. P. Everything dusking and stopping, eh? Drop that fool thing! (*Drent lays down banjo.*) Give me yo' wrist! (*Counts pulse.*) Eh?—Hm-m. So *that's* what yo' aunt—— Keep still a minute! (*He kneels beside Drent, with his ear over Drent's heart. Then he rises, with a face of serious concern, and begins to fumble in his saddle-bags.*) Whar's my stethoscope? Day of wrath! Whar's my stethoscope? Damned if I don't believe that Simmons baby got it! I gave it to him to play with, to stay his yawp,

while—— (*He takes a phial from his medicine case.*) Put out yo' tongue! (*Standing in front of Drent, he lets a drop or two fall from the phial on his tongue.*) Now, stay whar yo' are,—d'ye hear?—till I come back with that stethoscope. I won't be half an hour. Stay whar yo' are, I say! Stay whar yo' are, an' keep quiet. Don't let anything excite yo'——

DRENT. 'Tain't a moughty excitin' neighborhood, Doctor!

DR. P. So much the better. I'll be back in half an hour an' go through you good! (*He bustles down stage; and then comes hesitatingly back, lays his hand on Drent's shoulder and holds out the other hand to him.*) Yo' don't bear grudge to an old fool's yawp, eh, lad?

DRENT. Lord, Doctor, ef everybody yawped your tune, this world'd play good music!

DR. P. Quiet's the word, then, yo' young rascal! If I find you've moved a foot from that gallery, I'll give yo' a dose yo'll taste fo' a month!

(He bustles out, behind cabin, R. back. It is now soft, violet dusk. A few great bright stars shine, back, above the sandy levels. From the swamp there comes, eerie and minor, the long, shivering cry of the night owl. Drent picks upon his banjo again, with a list-

less, tired sigh. He softly hums "Lorena," "picking" a light accompaniment. After a few seconds pause, enter Suke from cabin, the branding iron in her hand.)

SUKE. By the time I ketched that fool calf, the iron wuz cold. *(She looks at Drent, wistfully.)* Ain't yo' comin' in fo' a bite o' corn pone, Honey? *(Puts iron into pot.)*

DRENT. Naw, Aunt Suke.

SUKE. No' fo' a mug o' coffee, Honey? Hit's moughty good an' strong.

DRENT. Not now, Aunt Suke.

SUKE. Ef yo' don't eat nothin', yo' no 'count critter, huccome yo'll have a voice to go sing fo' the quality?

(Carol Payne enters from the swamp-path, L. 3. Suke sees her and straightens up fiercely.)

DRENT. What quality folks be thar' a-honin' arter my singin'?

CAROL. I reckon, Drent, she means me.

(Drent springs to his feet, snatching off his hat.)

DRENT. Name o' Gawd! Whar'd yo' come from, Miss Carol?

CAROL. Down the swamp path hyar. An' I wished I hadn't when I saw how fast 'twas duskin'.

DRENT. Fo' de Lord's sake, Miss Carol, don' do sech loony things no mo'. De swamp path!

(He unconsciously presses his hand against his heart. Exit Suke into cabin, after a long unfriendly stare at Carol.)

CAROL. *(Crosses R. toward bench.)* The swamp path's so much shorter, Drent!

DRENT. Short ain't always safe, Miss Carol. Now it's July, thet thar swamp's just rank with copperheads. Ah don' follo' thet path no mo'!

CAROL. *(Seating herself on bench.)* Well, you shall take me back to the Page place by just what path yo' like, Drent, if you'll promise to sing for me, when we get there.

DRENT. Sing fo' yo'? Do yo' mean that, Miss Carol?

CAROL. Of course I mean it. I'm going to show—to show some people at the Page place that I'm not to be laughed at when I say yo' can put mo' honey in one sung line than—some folks—can in a week's pretty speeches.

DRENT. Yo' said that—o' my singin'—Miss Carol?

CAROL. And I meant it, Drent. Ever since yo'

sang that song fo' me and paw, that Sunday night
out here in the moonlight——

*(He catches up his banjo as if in a trance,
his eyes fixed passionately on her face, and
bursts into the song—*

*Her brow is like the snow drift,
Her throat is like the swan,
And her face is e'en the fairest
That e'er the sun shone on;
That e'er the sun shone on,
And she's all the world to me,
And for bonnie Annie Laurie
I would lay me down and die!)*

CAROL. Yes,—like that! Like that!

DRENT. Miss Carol, I'd sing fo' yo' like that,
f'om moonrise twell sun-up. Miss Carol, ef yo' asked
me to sing when I was a-lyin' under the swamp-grass,
I reckon my voice would pull my dead lips open!
W'en yo' says, "Sing," I feel as the mockin' birds
feel, when the big, sof' wind lifts their wings, and
somethin' in it melts way down into 'em—O, so sweet!
so sweet!—an' they know that it's the spring!
*(Frightened at his vehemence, Carol rises and stands
facing him, as he rushes on.)* But O! Miss Carol!
Yo' don' mean yo' want me to sing to yo' under no
roof. I couldn't do it, Miss Carol! I couldn't do

it no more than the mockin' bird sings when yo' cage him! Gimme jes' the moonlight an' the stars—
an' yo'—yo'——

(Carol crosses L. She speaks timidly and bewilderedly.)

CAROL. But yo' cayn't expect all the other folks, Drent, to come outside—in the night air,——

DRENT. The—other—folks?

CAROL. Yes, yes; the other folks! Don't yo' understand that I'm askin' yo' to come up to the Page place to sing at my pledgin' party,—my pledgin' to George Page, the Judge's son?

DRENT. Yo'—pledgin'—yo' an' George Page—
Naw! I *didn't* understand! I won't sing! I *won't* sing! Let *him* sing for yo'—let *him* sing—damn him!

(He throws down his banjo and buries his face in his bent arm, against the piazza-post.)

CAROL. I wouldn't have you sing—now. How dare you? I was a fool to come; George told me I shouldn't come, and that's why I came, I reckon. But it's fo' the last time, Drent Dury!

(As she moves toward the swamp-path, Drent suddenly starts erect; and after listening a second, leaps tigerishly toward her.)

DRENT. Come back hyar! Come back hyar, I say!

CAROL. He's crazy!

(She starts in terror into the swamp path. Drent leaps into it ahead of her; and flings her, very roughly, far toward centre of stage. He is hidden from sight in the wings. Carol bursts into a passion of terrified crying, holding her arm where Drent clutched it.)

CAROL. O! He's crazy! O! He'll kill me! He hurt me so! He hurt me so! *(Tremblingly puts up sleeve to look at arm.)* O, what shall I do! What shall I——

(Enter Judge Page from back R.; an erect, strikingly handsome and dignified man of forty-five. Carol, with a cry of joyful relief, flings herself into his arms.)

CAROL. O! I'm so thankful! O Judge Page, I'm so thankful!

JUDGE. *(Soothing her.)* I thought my son's little sweetheart was to remember my name was "father"! Child! Dear child! What has happened to you?

CAROL. O Judge Page! Drent Dury's crazy!

(Drent enters from swamp-path. He is ghastly pale. He limps painfully and has his hand tightly pressed against his leg, just above the knee.)

CAROL. Drent Dury's crazy! Or if he isn't crazy, he's—he's *worse!*

JUDGE. What do you mean? (*He speaks sternly. Keeping his left arm around Carol, he grips his stick in his right hand and advances a step.*)

CAROL. O Judge, he—said such things—such queer things—such——

JUDGE. You damned rascal!

CAROL. And when I was going, he jumped and caught me and flung me and hurt me. (*Sobbing.*) He hurt me so!

DRENT. Fo' Gawd! I didn't go fer to hurt yo', Miss Carol! fo' Gawd, I didn't! But I had to be quick. I reckon you didn't hear that copperhead hiss—an' I did.

CAROL. (*Springing from the Judge's arm.*) Copperhead?

DRENT. He was fair in the middle o' the path.

JUDGE. And you—took his bite?

DRENT. I reckon.

CAROL. O, no! O, what shall I do! O, yo' let yourself be snake-struck instead of me,—yo' po' brave fellow! Yo' poor, poor, dear, brave fellow!

(*She puts her hands upon his shoulders, and impulsively leans her cheek to his.*)

DRENT. Brave—dear—— (*He bends very lightly*

and timidly sidewise, and brushes her hand with his lips.) Gawd bless that snake, Miss Carol!

JUDGE. Carol! George is waiting with the horses yonder down the road. Quick, child, quick! The doctor! For his life! For his life! Bring him in time!

CAROL. He *must* be here in time! O Drent! O poor fellow! He *shall* be here in time! (*Rushes, weeping, out R. back.*)

JUDGE. My lad—I——

DRENT. (*Limps painfully across to R. and takes the branding iron from the pot.*) I know what's to be done, Jedge, and I reckon I can do it. Sh!—I hear Aunt Suke comin'. I cayn't be bothered with a woman while I'm doin' this. D'yo' hear me? Don't let Aunt Suke know! (*Limps painfully off R. back.*)

(*Suke rushes in from cabin.*)

SUKE. Who's that I heard a-screamin'? Yo' here? YO'? Whar's Drent? D'yo' hear me? Marston Page, I'm axin' yo' whar's Drent? Whar's Pen Dury's boy? Whar's yo' son?

JUDGE. My—son? Woman, are you mad?

SUKE. Mad? Yes! Mad as the copperhead that's bode his time to strike! That's why I've kept away from yo' all these months, Marston Page,—'cos I knew ef once I set my eyes on yo' I should strike

fo' my time! Time or not, I strike now! Yo' son! I say yo' son! Yo' SON, that Pen Dury mothered twenty year ago!

JUDGE. I never dreamed—I thought——

SUKE. That he was *mine*, mebbe? Not I! Pen learned lessons fo' us both! Not mine! *Hern!* Hern an' yourn! Hern an' yourn, that my sister carried with her when we locked this cabin do' behin' us that night yo' sailed fo' Europe, twenty year ago.

JUDGE. I never dreamed, I tell you—a youthful folly—— (*Sinks on bench.*)

SUKE. No woman ever yet took “youthful folly” as excuse fo' a woman's ruin—an' I reckon you'll find Hell won't! Pen Dury stood between yo' an' me while she lived, an' kept my hands off yo'; but she's gone now, an now yo'll reckon a reckonin', Marston Page—with her son, an' with *me!*

(*Drent comes from behind the cabin. A blood-stained bandage is bound about his knee. He stands listening.*)

SUKE. Yo' thought it was all over, yo' see—that “youthful folly!” Yo' thought nobody but Gor-a-mighty and some po' white trash would ever know how, when a po' girl said no to shame—though yo' wrapped it up in plenty o' money,—though her own heart tore itself out to say yes, fo' she loved yo' so,—

yo' stopped a man, hyar, on the road one day and yo' said: "Hyar! If I give yo' fifty dollars, will yo' go into that cabin an' say some marriage words over me'n that gal, an' *ask no questions?*" An' he took the fifty dollars, an' he came! An' yo' thought yo'd tricked my girl with a no-account pedlar an' a devilish lie! . . . But he worn't no pedlar! 'Twas yo' the devil tricked, an' not my sister Pen! That man wor a circuit rider—d'yo' hear, Marston Page? A travellin' parson—an' the marriage-words he spoke that day made my sister Pen yo' lawful wife!

JUDGE. Great God! (*Rising.*)

SUKE. God cayn't change it! (*She breaks into a wild laugh.*) Look at him! Look at him! I reckon the devil's pet joke is watchin' a man pay for a sin he *meant* to do,—and slipped up on!

JUDGE. And you mean, woman,—you mean——

SUKE. (*Tears paper from the bosom of her gown.*) I mean that's my sister Pen's marriage certificate, that she never let me touch while she lived, and that I took from her dead breast! I mean yo' fine lady wife is what yo' fine lady friends called my dead sister! I mean that yo' son George an' not yo' son Drent is daddyless! I mean that here's the paper that gives what I've ached and choked fo' fo' twenty years—an' now let me see yo' git it from me!

DRENT. (*Comes behind her and snatches the paper from her hand.*) I reckon I kin do that.

SUKE. Drent! (*She moves back as though to willingly resign her vengeance to him.*)

DRENT. (*Puts the paper into the fire-pot, ramming it down with the branding-iron.*) This yer fire has burnt out one snake-sting to-day; I reckon it can burn out another!

JUDGE. My boy—I——

(*Suke springs at him, tigress-like: he faces her imperiously; she shrinks before his look.*)

DRENT. Not that, Jedge. I don't take that word from yo' till I know whether my maw has forgiven yo'.

SUKE. Yo' maw! Yo' little cur! An' you burnin' the words that'd sweeten her name!

DRENT. I reckon where my maw is, her name don't need no sweetenin'. . . . It's all right, Jedge. . . . It takes mo'n a paper to make quality out o' po' white trash. . . . Marsr George he's well enough . . . an' he'll better . . . 'cos she loves him. . . . *He* wouldn't like to be no man's son. *I* haven't. . . . I'd rather . . . I'd rather sleep. . . . Lay me down an' . . . (*Sings.*) Lay me down and die. . . . (*Staggers to bench.*)

SUKE. What's got him? (*Rushes to him.*)

JUDGE. He was snake-struck, woman,—I tell you, he was snake-struck in the swamp-path. . . .

I thought the burning— . . . Let me look at his eyes! . . . Are the pupils narrowing? Let me look!

SUKE. His eyes? . . . Snake-struck! . . . Snake-struck! . . . Gawd! Why don't yo' get the doctor? Why—his eyes? I can't see. I'll fotch a torch.

. . . The Doctor, I say! Do yo' want me to *kill* yo'? The doctor!

(Judge Page rushes out.)

SUKE. Let me see yo' eyes, Honey. . . . Let me—— Keep on singin', cayn't yo', Honey? O Lawd, Lawd! Keep on singin'! . . . I'll fetch a torch! I'll fetch a torch! O Honey! Keep on singin'!

(Suke rushes into cabin. Drent rises staggeringly.)

DRENT. I'd have liked to have singed for her— Maw,—but ef yo' say it's time—to—git—ter sleep——

(Sings very faintly—

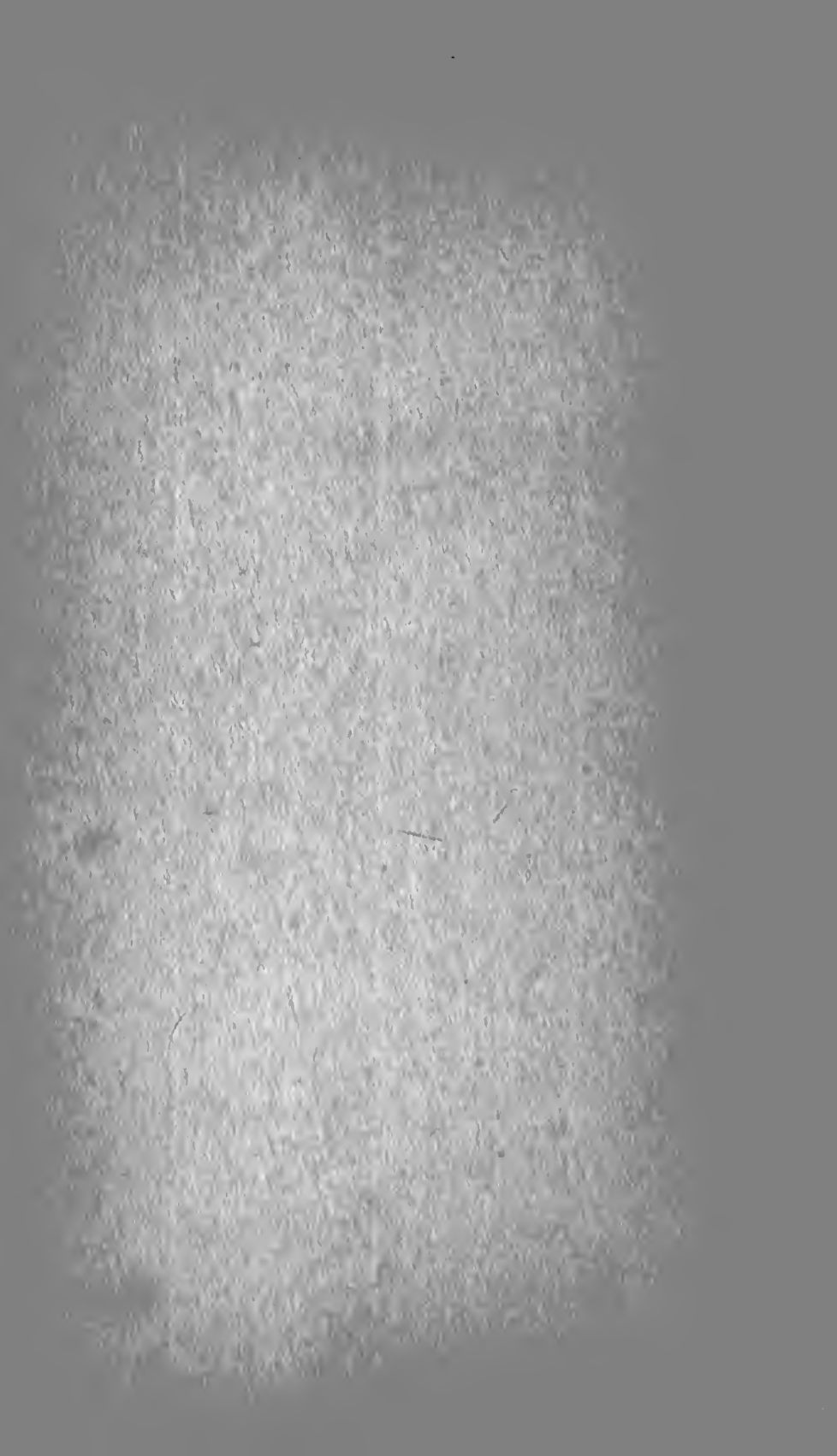
*I'll hunt no mo' fo' de possum an' de coon,
By de medder, de hill an' de sho';
I'll sing no mo' by de light ob de moon
On de bench by de ol' cabin do';
De days go by, like a shadder on de heart,
Wid sorrow whar once was delight;
De time hit come—when—*

(Falls backward, across the bench, with his dead face upturned in the moonlight. After a pause Suke's voice is heard,—“Huccum ye stop singin', Honey?” Suke rushes in, holding a flaring pine-knot above her head. She sweeps the torch low, and stares into his eyes. Then she sweeps the torch downward, in complete reversal, and its flame flickers and dies.)

SUKE. O Gor-a-Mighty! . . . Gor-a-Mighty!

(She flings herself in a passion of thick sobbing down across his body.)

(CURTAIN.)



IN FAR BOHEMIA



In Far Bohemia*

CHARACTERS REPRESENTED.

ALEC McLAREN.

KAREN DEMAR.

MRS. PENNYPACKER.

The scene is Alec McLaren's lodging room, in Mrs. Pennypacker's house. The time is midnight of a stormy November night.

The scene is a large, bare room in a city lodging-house. A fire is burning on hearth, R. C. A couch is drawn up before it with a pillow or two covered in bright chintz, and a dilapidated buffalo robe thrown over it. A table, C., is littered with books, newspapers, pipes, etc. A battered arm-chair stands beside it. Other chairs in various stages of disrepair stand about the room. There is a wall-cupboard, with doors left, back. At the left, back, a large, low window with curtain half drawn on its string. The

*This play was written in collaboration with Mrs. Emma Sheridan-Fry.

walls are ornamented with rough sketches, pictures from illustrated papers, etc., unframed; a pair of gloves and of foils; pipe rack, etc. On a row of hooks, back, left, hang various fancy costumes, odd hats, etc. A door, L. 4. As the curtain rises the wind is heard shrieking without; the door is pushed open and Mrs. Pennypacker, a thin, gaudily-dressed Cockney, enters. She carries a candle. She is speaking to some one on the stairs without.

MRS. P. I 'ope,—I sy, I 'ope as bein' mysulf a lydy, I shouldn't never ask no lydy to do nothink that didn't fit a lydy; an' when I says to you, Miss Demar, Come into Mr. McLaren's room for a rest an' a warm, you can be thoro-wahly sure as Mr. McLaren ain't——

(Karen Demar staggers in on the verge of fainting. Mrs. Pennypacker catches her in her arms and half carries her to the couch, where she drops her, lying helpless, none too gently; she says as she goes.)

MRS. P. Lord love ye, what's come to ye, Miss Karen! Ye give me a turn! Me 'art's a-breakin' out my stys! What's come to ye, I sy? *(Stands looking down at her.)* I know bloomin' well what 'asn't come to ye,—fire, nor food nor drink 'asn't come to ye, till yer 'ands is baby-bird claws an' yer eyes is at the bottom o' wells! 'Ere! Lucky as I

knows what'll bring you to life! (*She opens the door of the cupboard and takes down a whisky bottle and glass.*) I can't trust me 'and to carry a drop to the poor dear till me 'art gets quieter-like. It's a mercy Pennypacker, before ever we left Lunnon for America, an' 'e got 'is decree habsolute, taught me a thing or two about medicine!

(She pours out a finger of whisky and drinks with relish. As she wipes her mouth on her apron, she sees that Karen has faintly struggled to an upright position against the cushions, and is looking at her bewilderedly.)

KAREN. Mrs. Pennypacker! You!—Where am I? (*Stretches out her hands to fire.*) O, how good it is to be warm!

MRS. P. A drop o' this, my dear, 'll warm ye from the hinside hout,—from the houtside hin ain't nowise permanent nor satisfactory! (*Karen mechanically takes glass, but sets it down without tasting its contents.*) Providence, my dear, ever guides us to our needs, if we keeps our heyes open. Pennypacker 'e says to me many and many a time before he got his decree habsolute,—which was soon after we came to Hamerica, my dear!—“'Arriet,” 'e says, “in some things you 'ave a hinstinct! That's hall we can call it—a hinstinct!” An' it was my hinstinct,

under Providence, my dear, that led me to McLaren's cupboard.

KAREN. Mr. McLaren's—O, I had forgotten—this is Mr. McLaren's room. I have no right—I must not—— (*Tries weakly to rise.*)

MRS. P. No right, indeed! Mybe ye'll be flyin' next in the face o' Providence, an' sayin' a body has no right to the sty an' support Providence sends to their needs—maybe you'll say I've no right to the stimulat' drop I was about to take for the sinkin' in me, when you come to, an' I brought the stuff to you instead! (*Drinks again.*)

KAREN. I must go—go away from the fire! (*She leans shiveringly over it.*) It is time,—it must be time for Mr. McLaren to come back from the theatre.

MRS. P. It won't be for hours yet, my dear, McLaren'll be at 'ome. There'll be the manager to hinterview, an' the boys to stand drinks for, an'—well, as if you knew the news! McLaren's made a 'it!

KAREN. A—'it?—

MRS. P. Ah, my dear, not bein' in our branch of hart, p'raps you don't know what 'tis to make a 'it? (*Produces a stumpy black pipe, cleans it, fills it from a tobacco-box on mantel, and smokes, as she talks.*) M'ybe you won't mind my 'avin' a whiff, my dear; it combines wonderful with the other medicine

to quiet the 'art; an' bein' McLaren's own 'baccy, 'e caiyn't grumble at the smell! . . . Yes, McLaren's made a 'it. 'Twas me 'usband's nephew,—leastways me 'usband's cousin's nephew, as stys with me an' is the comfort of me age—'im as is right wing man down at the Globe Theayter where McLaren made 'is 'it to-night, as come back and told me. You see McLaren 'e's been twenty years a utility hactor. Wot's that? Wy, wen you're a utility hactor, you plays comic servants in the city for fifteen a week, an' Uncle Tom on the road for twenty-five a week, and 'Amlet, for fun, whenever you gets a chance—an' comes 'ome hon yer huppers! That's wot McLaren's been a-doin', an' 'e hall the time a character hactor fit to kill! Character! Anybody could see it with 'arf a heye,—hanybody but a manager! Managers! Faugh! If managers 'adn't been a set o' bloomin' fools, wouldn't I 'a 'ad my whack at Juliet, any day these forty years? Just because McLaren's got *character* written all over 'im, featured in the bill—display type—character's the one thing they wouldn't let 'im at! *Managers!* . . . Well, to-night they put on "Fetters of Flesh"—big play—first night—great part, written a-puypus for Algerson, leading comedy of the Meonian Co.—great part!—Gent 'oo's struck with paralysis in the prolouge, while 'e an' another vilyun, 'is pal, is foolin' with some pypers that mix things up for heverybody—mix up love-

interest, money-interest, heverythink—see? 'E knows it all, an' wants to straighten it ali, an' carnt—bloomin' paralysis—fettered by flesh,—see? Tries to make 'em understand—with one 'and—all 'e's got,—see? Rest of 'im stiff—an' one side of 'is face! See? Just in the end, wen the vilyun is 'avin everythink 'is own way, paralyzed party busts fetters o' flesh—see? Takes a big brace—speaks—moves—gives the 'ole damn thing away—gives away his pal—straightens things out—dies!—See! O, the part's a corker! 'Ole play belongs to that part! And to-night—second call—no Algerson. Not in theayter—nowhere! Manager wild—tearing! Three overtures. In comes Algerson—full as a tick—dead, howlin', tearin', fool drunk! Braced up for the first night—overdid it—See? Manager wild—raving! “'Oo's his d—d understudy?” says 'e? “Understudy?” 'owls the author. “Understudy go on in the biggest character part written for twenty years—smash my play? Smash *me*? Not if I”—— (*Imitates violent rage of swearing.*) Manager says, “Send audience 'ome and advertise the Globe shut up on a big first night? Smash *me*? Not if I”—— (*Imitates worse rage of swearing.*) McLaren, pretty white around the gills—his chance just jumping down his throat: “I've understudied Algerson, sir, an' I think I can play the part.” Humble apology to 'ouse—sudden and painful illness of Mr. Algerson—hindulgence

hasked for Mr. McLaren — ting-a-ling-a-ling!
Curtain hup! Hit went through the bloomin' lot!
Fish in water—man where he belonged—McLaren in
character work! Three calls hafter the prologue!
Five calls hafter the second hact! All 'ell hafter the
third hact! Author — McLaren — speech — 'owls—
'andkerchiefs — a 'it! — McLaren's made! *That's*
hall!

*(Karen has raised herself on her cushions
as Mrs. P. proceeds; and as she finishes, falls
back against them in hysterical laughter and
crying.)*

KAREN. O, I'm so glad for him! I'm so glad!
I'm so glad! It's so good that there's luck anywhere
in the world—for anybody!

MRS. P. There ain't much luck traveled your
way lately—eh, my dear? The little pictures don't
sell—eh?

KAREN. It must have been father's name on the
pictures that sold them. You know I painted them
all—all they bought, for months before he——

MRS. P. Before 'e was "released," as they say.
(Aside.) D. T.! An' they won't buy 'em now 'e
can't sign 'em? Dear, dear! Times *is* 'ard with
you, isn't they, dearie? I've known they was 'ard,
an' that was 'ow I 'adn't as much as mentioned that
trifle of rent.

KAREN. *(Rises staggeringly.)* O, I know,

Mrs. Pennypacker, I know! To-morrow,—perhaps—to-morrow!—— (*She crosses tottering to chair and falls into it.*) O, how stupid I am!—I can't—— (*Mrs. Pennypacker offers her the whisky glass; she faintly puts it aside.*) Not that! But if there were anything else,—just a crumb—just a swallow——

MRS. P. (*Hastens to window sill and takes tin can, bringing it to Karen.*) 'Ere you are, my dear—the very thing! Milk! Though why an unmarried—moral—man should 'ave milk——

KAREN. (*Pours out a little tremulously in glass.*) I think—he buys it—for the cat.

MRS. P. (*Pulling up her skirts.*) Cat? There ain't no cat!

KAREN. She lives on the roof. I don't think she ever comes in. I hear him coaxing her to, sometimes. He puts out the milk for her.

MRS. P. That's McLaren! Character!

KAREN. (*Drinks the milk at first daintily, then with a sudden passionate greediness.*) O, how good milk is! How——

(*She reaches out half-unconsciously for the can Mrs. P. extends to her. Before she touches it a voice is heard singing stentorianly, but evidently very far below stairs, "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!" Karen lays down the glass and moves more steadily, though still feebly, toward the door.*)

KAREN. O, Mrs. Pennypacker! You'll explain to Mr. McLaren? You'll tell him that I,—that to-morrow,——

(She goes out, catching at the door-post as she passes. McLaren's voice sounds more and more loudly in "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!" as he approaches the landing.)

MRS. P. Hexplain! Hexplain! That's heasy said,—but with so much gone from the milk,—an' a trifle from the whisky,—an' McLaren maybe that 'otty from 'avin made 'is 'it——

(She agitatedly puts whisky-bottle to her lips as McLaren enters. He wears an ancient theatrical cloak and slouch hat. His arms are full of cans, bottles, bundles and the like. He is still jovially singing. He pauses at sight of Mrs. P.)

McL. Your very good health, Mother P.! *(She endeavors confusedly to put the bottle back in the cupboard, but can't find the door.)* O, don't hurry! Don't hurry! Glenlivat of that quality is its own excuse for consumption!

(He puts down bundles, takes off cloak and hat, warms himself at fire, etc., as the scene proceeds.)

MRS. P. O, Mr. McLaren! I 'ope as 'ow you won't think it strynges—

McL. I give you my word, Madam, I never thought anything strynges in my life—my vowels are not constructed on that principle! Moreover an exposition of sociability hath come upon me,—and I suppose I might as well take it out with you as with the—other—cat! Especially as you haven't her unkind way of rejecting my hospitality; you even accept it—unsolicited—you know! (*He goes to mantel, takes pipe and opens tobacco-box to fill it.*) Have a pipe-full, Mrs. P.?—Eh?— (Looks into jar.) I should say, have—another—pipe-full? (*Smokes.*)

MRS. P. O, Mr. McLaren, I'm *that* upset! What with your hamazin' 'it—

McL. Oh! The news of my 'it 'as reached 'ome already, 'as it? This is fyne! (*Sits smoking.*)

MRS. P. (*Slightly maudlin.*) What with your 'it, and the queer goin's-on of Miss Demar, across the 'all, there—

McL. (*Drops his pipe on table.*) Miss Demar? What goings-on?

MRS. P. Such a hamazin', hunexpected 'it!

McL. Hit be damned! What's been happening to Karen Demar? (*Rises.*) Woman! Woman! Gather up the fragments of yourself and talk sense! English you can't talk—I don't ask it of you, knowing you came from England!—but sense you

can talk, now and then, with an effort! Brace up! Make your effort! What's happened to that little girl across the hall?

MRS. P. Starvation's 'appened to 'er—that's wot! An' faintin' away dead as a corpse on that there sofy!

McL. God bless that sofa!

MRS. P. When I 'eard 'er a-goin' out at ten o'clock of such a tempestrious night as this——

McL. Out at ten o'clock? That child? What for? Alone?

MRS. P. I says to myself, when a pretty girl who's got no friends nor clothes—nor food—nor fire—nor money—starts out alone at ten o'clock of a tempestrious night, it means, one of two things. Now, she bein' wot she is, one thing it don't mean with Karen Demar—though there's many a gentleman, single *and* married——

McL. I don't want to figure in the papers to-morrow morning other than in my professional capacity—but there are moments when assault and battery—— (*He eyes Mrs. P. vengefully and slowly turns up his cuffs.*)

MRS. P. And the other thing was—the river!

McL. The river! Good God! (*Snatches up his hat.*) But you said she came back again—didn't you? (*He catches Mrs. P. by the shoulders and slightly shakes her.*) You practical exemplification of all the vices! You said so!—didn't you?

MRS. P. Certain sure I said so! (*Releases herself gasping.*) Didn't I tell you I brought her to, with your whisky, in this very room? An' a relief it was, I do sy, an' me a-settin' up wytin' for the police to come and tyke me away to identify her drowned body.

McL. You—a-wytin'—not following the child,—not,—just—a-wytin'— (*He deliberately opens door.*) Mrs. Pennypacker, I think your husband's cousin's nephew must be wytin' for you at your domestic hearth!

MRS. P. (*Goes bewilderedly toward door.*) Well—upon—my— (*Looks toward bottle on table.*)

McL. Take it, Mrs. Pennypacker. (*Carries bottle to her.*) Take it with my love and the compliments of the season—take it and depart—O, depart!

MRS. P. (*At threshold.*) Well, I cayn't see what *you've* done for that starvin' girl any more'n me. 'Aven't *you* just set a-wytin'? Just a-wytin'!— (*Goes slowly, muttering and shaking her head.*)

McL. (*Goes back to table, absently takes up pipe; crosses to fire; leans on mantel.*) Right you are, Pennypacker! We're pennies of a pattern! Wytin'! Yes, that's what I've been doing,—waiting—and that little girl wearing away like a snow-wreath before my eyes, day after day—her dear, blue eyes getting bigger and bigger, and her poor little wrists

getting smaller and smaller—*starving*—and I wallowing in luxury—and having luxury left over for Penny-packer to wallow in! Damn it all! What can I do? What could I ever do? Proud as—as a decent little girl should be; no more take a cent from me than that confounded cat—by the way, that reminds me. (*Opens garret window and looks for cat.*) Puss! Puss! Kitty! Kitty! Kitty! O, there you are, are you? Won't you come in? *Do* come in! Perhaps you don't know I've made a hit? Oysters every day after this! Oysters *now*! (*Comes back and opens can; holds up oyster.*) Come in and have one? No! Confound you, perhaps you won't come in till I'm a *star*? Take it then—take several! (*He throws oysters out one after another; comes back and wipes his hands.*) It's no use! Not even a cat to jubilate with! (*Takes up pipe again.*) And my hit's made! Who was the man who said he didn't get his Eden Rose till he'd lost his sense of smell? That's *me*! (*Smokes gloomily.*) And that Little 'Un freezing to death and starving to death—and I—— (*There is a faint cry and a light fall without.*) Good Lord! What's that?—I thought—if it should be—I suppose I've no business to—Damn propriety!

(*He rushes out. After a pause he brings Karen in, in his arms, very tenderly. Her hair is loose. She is deathly white. He lays*

her on the sofa, covers her with the buffalo robe, chafes her hands, etc.)

McL. I say, Little 'Un—Just open your eyes a minute, can't you? Just a minute? There's a pulse at her wrist! She isn't dead! She can't be dead! She *shan't* be dead! Little 'Un!—— (*He rushes to cupboard, and then remembers the whisky is gone; takes flask from pocket.*) So much saved from the Pennypacker! (*He puts it to her lips.*) Just a drop or two, Little 'Un! There! That's better, isn't it?

KAREN. (*Opening her eyes; faintly.*) Mrs. Pennypacker!——

McL. Odor of whisky! Force of association!

KAREN. Mrs. Pennypacker, I—why, I'm in Mr. McLaren's room, still! I thought I went back!—I thought—— Mr. McLaren! (*She struggles to rise.*)

McL. Stay where you are! (*She sinks back.*) Come, now, Little 'Un, don't you see you've got to stay where you are? You can't get up alone, and I'm blamed if I help you. I've helped you to do enough in the suicide line, lately—helped you by looking on and wytin'—I mean waiting.

KAREN. (*Bewildered.*) Mr. McLaren!

McL. O, well, I'm rattled, that's a fact; but there's nothing worse the matter with me. I only want you to stay where you are. It's warm; that

room I took you from is a refrigerator! Child, you were lying—— (*He stops, choking with emotion.*)

KAREN. (*Faintly.*) Yes—I know.

McL. And there's something to eat here. There's a great deal to eat. I had some idea of celebrating—with the cat. (*Fumbles among packages.*) But the cat didn't see it. There's some wine jelly in that bowl. (*Hands it to her.*) Eat every last drop of that wine jelly, Little 'Un! Do you hear? Eat that jelly!

(She mechanically obeys: and presently eats with mad eagerness. He watches her with growing emotion: and at last turns his back, unable to bear her hunger.)

KAREN. (*She sets down the bowl with a long sigh, and speaks wistfully, after a little pause.*) O, I wish you hadn't done it, Mr. McLaren! Now it's only to do over again—all over again!

McL. (*Coming forward.*) What's to do over again?

KAREN. The starving. The freezing. The dying. It was almost done. If you'd left me where I fell, it would have been done, before morning. I knew that,—that's why I didn't go to the river to-night. I started to go to the river; and then I said: "It will come before morning anyway; and it had better come at home."

McL. (*With a sob.*) At home! O, Little 'Un!

KAREN. There's no place in this world for a girl who wants to keep good, and hasn't any one to take care of her—and isn't clever enough to do any work the world wants. I was almost through; why didn't you let me go the rest of the way? (*Crying softly.*)

McL. Because there was somebody to take care of you. Because it isn't going to begin again—Lie still, Little 'Un. I'm going to talk straight talk. If I say anything I oughtn't or do anything I oughtn't you can go away, you know—after you've killed me. Did you know you were engaged to be married? Well, you are; and after you've had a good nap—— (*Tucks the buffalo robe around her.*) and some breakfast, I'm coming back. (*Begins to put on cloak and take up hat.*) And I'm going to bring a parson and a license, and you're going to sign your checks Karen McLaren before to-day noon. (*As she tries to rise and speak.*) Hold on! Lie still! I'm not through yet. I'd like to adopt you—I'd *rather* adopt you—but I can't. The world is full of people—mostly Pennypackers—and it wouldn't go down. But if I marry you, it'll be nobody's business, will it? I've made a hit—you didn't know that, maybe? Wait till the morning papers come out! I've made a hit; and I go with the company to New York to-morrow, to play the biggest character-part the American stage has seen in twenty years, at

a salary of several figures. That's settled. Well, then! What's the matter with your going to school? There isn't a Kindergarten department in the country wouldn't be proud of you! What's the matter with your studying Art,—Paris—you know—anywhere? I'll insure my life to-day,—you may be a widow before you've grown up! You needn't be afraid of my bothering you, you know. I made my hit in a character-part—I won't tackle Romeo just yet! You shall be as free as if I'd adopted you; and if you ever, after you're grown up, run across Romeo—why—I'll see you get a decree absolute with alimony! Come now, Little 'Un? It's a bargain? Ah? Do it for charity! Think what a mercy it'll be to a man who hasn't anything in this world but a damned unsocial cat!

KAREN. (*Tremblingly begins to put up her loosened hair.*) Mr. McLaren, I thought,—O I thought you thought I was—a good—woman!

McL. Little 'Un! For God's sake! (*Bewildered.*)

KAREN. (*Rises, steadying herself tremulously against the sofa.*) Could a good woman—could any woman with an honest heart—take home, and shelter, and comfort, and all a woman wants in this world—from a man who only pities her—who does not want her ever to be near him——

McL. Pities her? Doesn't want her near him?

Little 'Un, I love the ground under your poor blessed worn-out little shoes! Don't want her near me? Little 'Un, I've stood half the night with my face against your door! But—I've no business to tell you such things! I never meant to tell you such things! You're a child! You were born a lady! You'll grow up—a lady! And I—I—Child! I've been a strolling player for twenty years!

KAREN. (*Begins to beat up the pillows.*) Do you think the clergyman will mind so many stairs?

McL. Little 'Un!

KAREN. You can tell me the rest, you know, now I know the principal thing—You can tell me the rest, bye and bye,—in a year or two, when I've graduated from the Kindergarten.

(*McL. sits, dropping his face on his arms.
Karen goes to the window, and raises the shade.*)

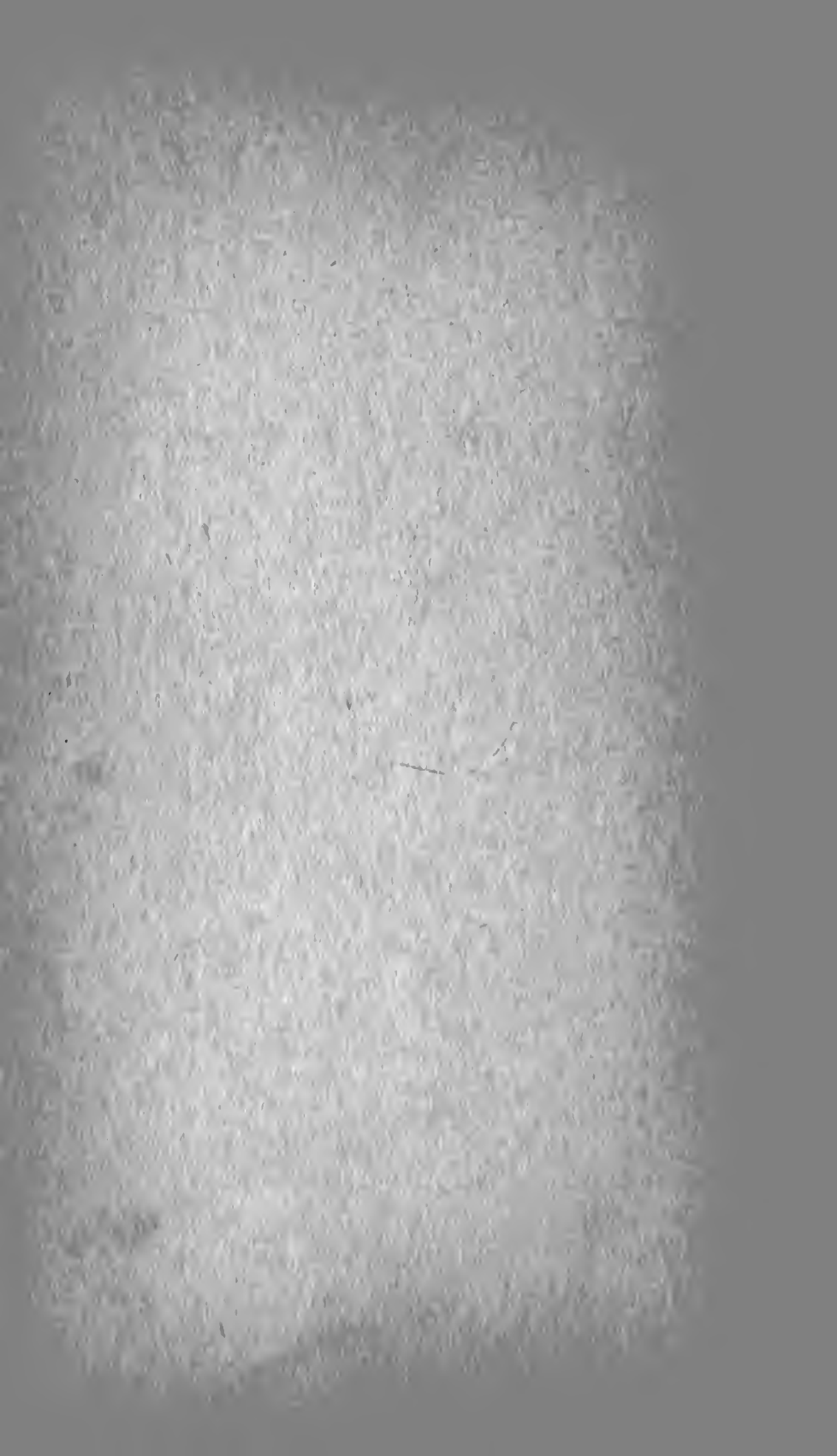
KAREN. Why, it's dawn—and I do believe there's the cat! (*Comes down to him.*) Do you know, so many times when I've heard you calling that cat, I've wanted to crawl over the roof and say: "O, please call me home, instead!"

McL. (*Starts up; opening arms.*) Little 'Un, if you say that sort of thing—I—Not now! (*He takes her hands and kisses them very tenderly; then he leads her to the couch and tucks her in.*) You'll

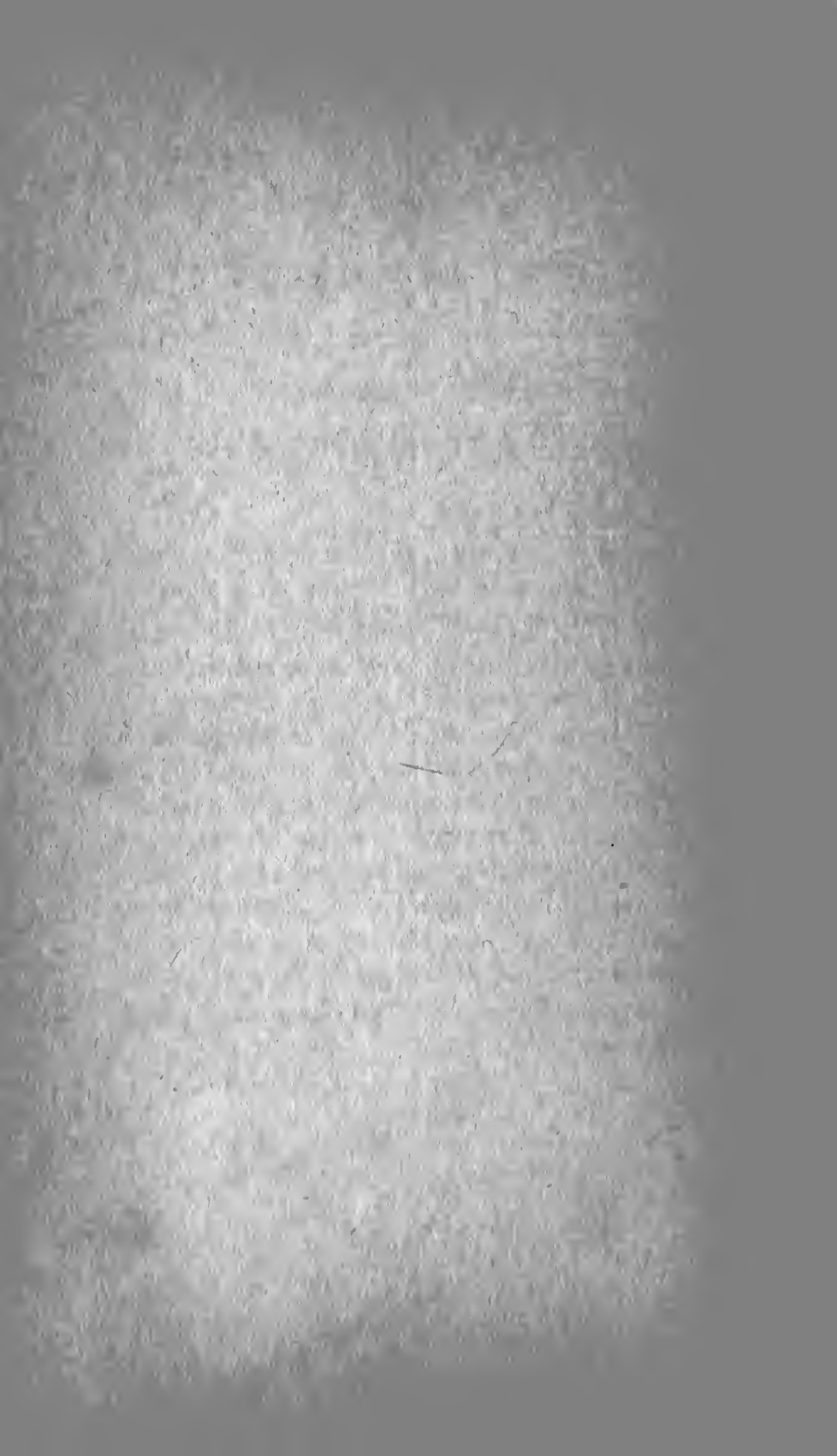
sleep till I come with the parson? (*Spent and exhausted, she sleeps. Looks toward window.*) Dawn!—and our wedding-day! O, Little 'Un! Little 'Un! God bless you! (*Goes to door.*)

(*He buries his face in his bent arm, leaning against the door and sobbing.*)

(CURTAIN.)



THE END OF THE WAY



The End of the Way*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

WILL SCARLETT (of Robin Hood's Sherwood Out-laws.)

LADY JACQUELINE WEREWOOD.

The period is the close of the twelfth century. The place is the castle hall of Sir John Werewood. The time is half past twelve of an October night.

The scene is the hall of the castle of Sir John Werewood. It is an ancient hall of stone, after the manner of the Saxon castles of the twelfth century. There is a great fireplace; the logs are smouldering low, as if the fire had been banked with ashes. A few pieces of massive furniture. As the curtain rises, Lady Jacqueline pushes aside the arras that hangs over one of the doors, and comes in, speaking as she does so, backward, to some one in the corridor without. She wears the dress of a boy of the period.

* This play was written for and is the property of Mr. Robert Ederson.

LADY J. Come your ways in, Will Scarlett. Nay, man, in with thee; what dost thou fear?

(Will Scarlett enters, with much caution. He carries his long bow: a sheaf of arrows is slung over his back.)

WILL. "What fear I?" quoth he. Ay, marry, what should any he who hunts with Robin Hood, fear in the stronghold of a righteous magistrate? A naught, a whifflet. Merely a stout cord around the arms for first "God speed thee,"—and presently a stouter cord around the neck.

LADY J. Nay, Will. Here's my word that that stout throat of thine shall know naught more comfortable than a draught of the soundest Rhenish.

WILL. "Rhenish!" As he were lord o' the castle!

LADY J. Lord of the castle am I not; yet I can guess me shrewdly where good Rhenish grows therein; ay, and a crusty loaf, to test those excellent teeth of thine; and a cheese so rich with age, that e'en the mice race from the smell of it. Warm thee, Will, and take my word that presently we'll feast as fair as good comrades should, when they are come to the farewell, and to the end of the way.

WILL. The end of the way. Ay, and had I not been fool, e'en to the marrow of me, I had met the end of the way, a good rood or two nearer to where lies mine own safety.

LADY J. But thou wert loath to cry me farewell. Nay, say it, churl; 'twas for that thou didst cry "Down!" to thy good caution.

WILL. Nay, I'll speak truth and no smoothness. I came with thee unsafely beyond the forest, for that I mistrusted thy hot head would ne'er get thy fool's feet in surety to the end of thy race.

LADY J. Yet my fool's feet have led thee to the losing of thy wager, eh, Will Scarlett?

WILL. Ay, that through fools' luck have they. I wagered thee thou ne'er wouldst get uncaught into the strong castle o' Sir John Werewood, worshipful magistrate; and it seemeth thou art here; and for my sins, I also—and the more fools be we all.

LADY J. (*At fireplace.*) The more fool this green wood, for that it smokes like half-caught love, and warms a wayfarer as little. Burn warmer, thou varlet. (*Pokes fire.*)

WILL. A murrain on thy clamor! Wouldst wake the castle? What say I? Is't mayhap thy will to wake the castle? For this was thy wager? God's death! Has my thick wit led me into the snare the honest are aye laying for us greenwood thieves? (*He fits an arrow to his bow.*)

LADY J. (*Faces him squarely.*) And with this word, Will Scarlett, thou facest a leal comrade, at the end o' the way?

WILL. (*Slowly dropping bow.*) I wronged thee?

Nay, I cannot read thine eyes and not know I have wronged thee. Traitor's a vile word. Reckon with me as thou wilt, lad—thy fist or a throw at wrestling.

LADY J. Nay, and I said ay to either, where were I in the next breath taken? I am in no haste to see Paradise.

WILL. Paradise would be a strange lodging for thee, thou fly-afield. 'Tis from the other road I guess thy journey's wended.

(Points significantly downward.)

LADY J. Mayhap; and mayhap 'tis why I find this world too cold a spot for comfort. *(Pokes fire again.)*

WILL. Quiet, I say. Wouldst have theri ghteous magistrate afoot?

LADY J. The righteous magistrate's at a far calling. Sir John's in Palestine.

WILL. At the Crusades? I thought him home ere this. But we lads of the greenwood follow scantily the doings o' court folk.

LADY J. Sir John doeth in Palestine, Will, what thou and thy greenwood lads make shift at here; namely, relieve the heathen of goods which Heaven meant for true Christians!

WILL. With this good difference, lad: The robbers in the Holy Land come back with praise and

pelf; and the robbers o' the greenwood are fair game for every sheriff's arrow.

LADY J. All good sheriffs' arrows sleep i' their quivers. 'Tis hours since curfew-time. Rest thee by the fire, good Will; I'll e'en go a-hunting for that Rhenish I have vowed to thee.

WILL. Nay, I'll rest not. 'Tis not so many hours to dawn; 'tis a shrewd mile to Sherwood, lad, 'tis the way's end; and so God speed thee. 'Twas a good journey, though the strangest e'er I wended; but the journey's done.

LADY J. Nay, the way's not ended, Will, till we've pledged its good end in good Rhenish. I'll fetch it thee, ere thou hast said, "Where goest thou?"

WILL. (*Laying his hand heavily on her shoulder.*) Nay, that's already said; and more's said. Not only "Where goest thou?" but "Thou goest not"—till I know where thou goest.

LADY J. 'Tis not the hunter of hares, 'tis the hare that fears hunting that holds me here. I ne'er thought to see Will Scarlett o' this complexion.

WILL. Thou'lt see more in Will Scarlett than thou e'er hast seen, and thou'lt feel that from Will Scarlett that thou ne'er hast felt, if thou curb not thy fool's tongue. "Hunted hare"? What else is every right-born Englishman that stands for his right-born king? Is't for mine own skin I fear? Thou'st

fared with me a seven-days' journey. Answer thou that thyself!

LADY J. Nay, Will—dear Will, thy life hath guarded mine when no need was, at the call of thy good heart; and in my heart thy courage is writ sure. 'Tis but that I do not know thee in thy new humor.

WILL. 'Tis the humor of him who fears for a comrade; and that's the fearsomest fear of all. Hark ye, Jackbrain! Seest thou not 'tis not alone Will Scarlett's life I bring here to-night on this fool's wager? If I'm taken? If they lay me on the rack, and my pluck cracks with my bones . . . and when they say, hand on screw, "Where bides Robin Hood, and what's his password? . . . God's my life! Better men than I have said the word that's sped a comrade to the rope, and themselves to the hell of traitors. I'll take no chance. It is farewell, indeed, I say; and so thy hand and it's ended.

LADY J. A man foresworn art thou. "If thou enterest the Werewood hall uncaught,"—this thy word under last night's white stars—"I'll tarry there with thee and drink thy pluck in Sir John's borrowed wine." We're here, the wine is within easy stealing. I claim thy pledge, man. Will, let me to the cellar.

WILL. 'Twas a fool's pledge. I'll not keep it to a right man's risking. Thy hand. Nay? Then farewell and no clasping!

(He starts for the door.)

LADY J. Farewell; and good riddance to a liar.

WILL. *(Starting back in hot anger.)* Nay, now I go not, tide what betide, till the hand thou wouldst not clasp hath taught thee the lesson thou art aching for.

LADY J. *(Greatly startled.)* What meanest thou, Will,—good Will?

WILL. Good will I do thee,—I and my stout belt. Nay, many a time in this our week of wandering have I raid, “A murrain on the lad’s sharp nettle-tongue. Sure the fool that begot him hath never learned what sound medicine for Jackanapes hides in a hickory rod!”

(He takes off his belt and swings it.)

LADY J. That’s—that’s no hickory rod.

WILL. Thy shoulders will guess no mighty difference.

LADY J. Thou’dst beat me, Will?

WILL. Ay will I, with good heart; and so do thee a charity.

LADY J. A—a charity, Will?

WILL. A charity. For did I not teach thee that a man is not called a liar and a coward by every wandering Jackanapes he journeys with, some other will e’en teach thee, not with a belt, but with an arrow, drawn to the head.

LADY J. Will, thou wilt not.

WILL. Who now is hunted hare? Off with thy doublet!

LADY J. Will, thou canst not!

WILL. Thy shoulders shall guess that. Off with thy doublet!

LADY J. (*Strips off her doublet and stands in the soft, white shirt beneath.*) To it then. I'm ready

(*Will lifts his arm for a swinging blow with the belt: she looks at him fearlessly. After a pause his arm slowly drops, he puts on his belt with unsteady hands; he passes his hand across his forehead.*)

WILL. Beshrew thine eyes! There's magic in them! Nay, I swear it on the rood; there's magic in them. How else when I would have given thee the sound trouncing thou dost so soundly need, doth my arm drop strengthless? Boy, is't true? Hast meddled with the magic? Nay, I'll ne'er betray it to the priests. Speak true. Hast meddled with the magic?

LADY J. (*Puts on her doublet again.*) With white magic, mayhap, Will; but ne'er with black magic, on my man's word.

WILL. White magic? What doth white magic do?

LADY J. Why, many things, my Will, and all of

them good. As this, Will. Harkye! Thou wouldst not let me go to seek the Rhenish we drink farewell in, therefore, by my white magic, go I to this arras, and say to my white spirit, "What ho! Wine for us of the best. Ay, and crusty loaf, and cheese to men's liking." (*A table is pushed between the curtains, having on it the things demanded.*) And lo! my kind spirit waits not, but serves us on the word. (*She pulls the table into the room and wheels it forward.*)

WILL. (*In mortal terror.*) Saint George! A million devils! Saint Peter and Saint Patrick! Bid it away! I have no silver arrow, and witches care naught for good English arrow wood. Bid it away! Nay, then, I'll e'en do what an archer may. (*With trembling hands he begins to fit an arrow to the string.*)

LADY J. (*Who has been in uncontrollable fits of laughter.*) Down with thy bow! Thou very Prince of thick wits! Down with thy bow. Art thou gone dream-struck? Dost not see? Will naught but very magic lighten thy blind eyes? Peer out through yonder curtains, then, and tell me what thou seest!

WILL. (*With the most elaborate caution, he peers through the drapery, through which the table has been pushed.*) Let me sniff shrewdly, first. Is there brimstone in the air? What see I? An old dame—or so she seemeth; but, alack-a-day! She may be

the devil, for aught my wildered sense can swear. She hasteth away—and laugheth as she goes.

LADY J. Well may she laugh. 'Tis a rare sight to see the doughtiest archer in all green Sherwood, fleeing in terror from—from what? A well-laid table!

WILL. Nay, if 'twas laid in Tophet, I'll ne'er sup at it. Read me the riddle . . . I'll guess no more. And the riddle I'll read, or I bide here till the sun wakes the sheriff.

LADY J. Ay' now that's right bravely said, Will Scarlett. Sit ye down. I'll read whatever page of my poor riddle thou'lt turn me to. Sit ye down. Eat, man, eat.

WILL. (*Cautiously approaching the table.*) I'll but sip the flagon. E'en the Devil can but half spoil good Rhenish. (*He drinks.*) And in such Rhenish—good lack—I'd all but pledge the Devil!

LADY J. (*Perching on the edge of the table and nibbling a bit of bread.*) Thy catechism, Will! My faith's pledged to its answering.

WILL. Whence come these? (*Indicates things on table.*)

LADY J. From the larder of the worshipful Sir John Werewood—now in . . . Palestine. (*With an effect of having been about to say, "in Paradise."*)

WILL. Who stole them hence?

LADY J. Nay, "steal" is no pretty word, amongst thieves! No steal: a good gift from Sir John's good-

heart housekeeper, she who hath cared me through many a care of my calf-time.

WILL. And 'twas even she who opened to thee, but now, and let thee pass, uncaught?

LADY J. Even she.

WILL. My wool-wits clear. And this was thy magic!

LADY J. (*Laughing.*) Nay, I told thee 'twas white magic.

WILL. One more, and my catechism's sped: How camest thou in the wood?

LADY J. The wood?

WILL. Ay, Jackanapes. The wood where a se'n-night since I found thee in the nightfall, nursing thy twisted foot and wailing as 'twere a deer in a springe: "Alack-a-day! it darkens; I've lost my road and lamed my tired foot. I pray o' thee, good archer, whereaway lies Werewood?"

LADY J. And thou didst answer, Greatheart, "A many leagues from here lies Werewood. Lame duck that thou art, come, lean on a comrade's shoulder—we'll fare together."

WILL. Ay, an' we've fared it, over rough ways and smooth, all the way through; and now the way's ended. But thou dost not fairly meet my catechism: How came thou in that wood?

LADY J. They sent me to a place I liked not——

WILL. Too free gift o' the hickory, eh?

LADY J. Too many prayers.

WILL. Ay, praying's clear not in thy talent——

LADY J. Nor in thine, eh, Master Scarlett—eh?

WILL. Nay, but an outlaw may say a prayer—so 'tis an outlaw's prayer.

LADY J. Be outlaws churchmen, then?

WILL. Nay, 'tis not in a church my prayers come—the priests are in the way. 'Tis when I stand i' the greenwood—and the trees talk i' the night wind, and the stars are big, and at my foot is a comrade's grave, that died in a good fight—'tis then the heart cries up to find what's i' the wind's voice and the star's silence; and to find where live the men who died for men.

LADY J. May such a prayer be said for me in such a heart. Amen.

WILL. Sayest thou so, lad? Ay, and 'twas said with good heart.

LADY J. With all my heart, such as my heart is, 'twas said.

WILL. Thou sayest it? (*He rises eagerly.*) Nay then, lad, why shouldst not make it sooth? To die i' the greenwood, must a man live i' the greenwood. Wilt cast thy life there? Think, . . . there's no life freer—no life in the which a man's so true a man.

LADY J. I trust that, for I have known an outlaw. But, Will, dear Will, the life of a true man i' the greenwood is not for me.

WILL. And wherefore not, lad? I' the name o' the saints, wherefore not? My faith upon it, thou'rt fatherless.

LADY J. Ay, unfathered and unmothered.

WILL. And no one rules thee with right, who rules thee into the uncomforth thou didst flee from. 'Twas a brave flight, that flight. The lad who flees from slavery fights for liberty, when the man's beard comes. Thou fleest from no duty who fleest to the greenwood with me. Lad, my heart is moved as 'twere by magic indeed. I knew not till thou spakest that word, how ill it were for me to leave thee. Lad, I have had no full-heart comrade since I was myself a very lad. I know not by what strong moving I am moved to plead thee. Come to the free life—to the wood's life, to the man's life. I have been thy field-mate but a star's hour, yet art thou heart-mate to me, as none has been since my brother died a lad, here on my breast. Lad, be my very brother. I'll make thee man. I'll guard thee as guards a man. Lad, the stars set, I must begone. . . . Wilt come?

LADY J. I may not, Will, . . . brave heart, I may not.

WILL. And wherefore "may not"? Dost hope for preferment, in turning hearth-dog here? What means preferment? To wait upon a great man's nod; to pay thy manhood, that thou mayest eat rich

and lie soft; to live a lackey, and fare, up yonder, as they fare who have sold soul's right for body's safety. Nay, in the greenwood there's naught between a man's soul and the stars of God. And, therefore, man stands—at man's whole height. . . . Lad: Come!

LADY J. I may not, Will. Nay, despise me not—an' thou knewest all, thou wouldst say, "Stay: 'tis honor." . . . Will! Look not at me, as one who scorns a coward. . . . Will! Thou shalt not go in scorning. At the way's end, Will—the good way we have fared together—thou shalt not go in scorning! Bide here but one small moment, Will: In one small moment I will show thee without words why 'tis I may not fare with thee. Glad would I fare with thee, staunch heart; but for—— Nay, wait but for this one small moment, Will. Thou thyself shalt say—shalt bid me——

(She holds out her hands to him, in a piteous appeal, as she goes from the room.)

WILL. *(Looking after him, in bewilderment.)* What means the lad? "I may not, in honor,"—"thou'lt say I may not, an' thou seest,"—— See what? What next of magic? All things fade in mine eyes to a dancing dream. What is't to me, Will Scarlett, archer and outlaw, so a lad cometh wi' me or no? . . . A lad I ne'er set eyes on, till a

se'nnight gone? Met eyes of? Ay, there is't; there lies his magic. His eyes are as the deer a man tames to his hand. They're as the stars a man lifts prayer to. They're—— Nay—I'm fay-struck. I'll away. He will not fare with me, what matters why? I'll away! (*Starts toward door, hesitates, returns.*) Nay, but I pledged to him a stirrup-cup, at the way's end. I'll drink it wi' him; he shall not say again, "Hunted hare!" and "Liar!" Ay, "Liar," said he, and walks afoot with a whole head! Tell it not in Sherwood forest, lest all true men forswear my company! How low burns the fire! It feels the dawn chill. . . . Nay, for my comrades' sake I must be afoot. I'll wait no longer.

(*As he turns to go out, Lady J. enters, in her woman's attire.*)

WILL. (*Starting at sight of her.*) I'm trapped! A fool must e'en woo his destiny! I've no one word to offer—the cord's about my throat. Madam, I pray you take no fear of me.

LADY J. Nay, Will Scarlett, why should thy field-mate have fear of thee?

WILL. My field-mate?—Thou?—Nay, . . . By our Lady o' grace! . . . Lad! 'Tis thou? 'Tis truly thou?

LADY J. In verity, Will Scarlett, it is I. But no lad, Will.

WILL. God's death!—a maid?

LADY J. Canst thou forgive me, Will, that I'm no lad? That I took lad's good help of thee, who am no lad?

WILL. No lad? A maid? Nay, then the magic's clear. . . . White magic—aye, indeed, white magic—the magic of a white maid's eyes.

LADY J. I meant to tell thee, Will; but thou saidst, who thought me lad, "I'll company thee to the way's end." And, Will, I was so lone, so lame, so frightened, . . . and thy strong shoulder was so good to lean on . . . Will,——

WILL. Nay, 'twas best—'twas a good way. I had not companied thee, this good way, had I known thee maid. Is the way ended,—is't in very truth ended,—this way we fare together?

LADY J. (*Startled.*) How else, Will? Great-heart, how else?

WILL. Nay, thus else: If I bade thee, a lad, bear me long company,—be field-mate, and wood-mate, and heart-mate—a million times do I so cry thee now! Mine as no lad could e'er be mine! Mine by the right of man's love, born the hour thou criedst upon me in thy need; nourished by every hour we companied together under God's free stars; revealed to this my wildered soul, when but now I would have done thee pain in my just anger, and thine eyes struck mine arm strengthless. In that

love's name, come forth! What are they to thee, from whom thou didst flee? I will be all to thee—thou shalt lack naught. Comrade for life and death and love that's deathless, come forth with me, and learn what like is life and love when man lives and loves with naught but the starset sky between him and his God!

LADY J. (*Breaks into a passion of sobbing.*) I may not, Will, I may not. . . . Will, I am nor lad nor yet free maid. Will, I am Lady Werewood!

WILL. A wife!—My life's love—and a wife!

LADY J. A wife who ne'er knew love, . . . a wife who ne'er knew wifeness. By my father's death-couch,—Will, by my father's dying command, I gave my hand into the hand of Sir John Werewood, my father's oldest, closest of comrades. . . . “'Twill be safety for thee, maid!”—my father gasped, and died. . . . A priest had stood beside the couch; they told me when they lifted me from my dead father's breast, the word of that priest had sealed me wife.

WILL. And thy husband?

LADY J. He stood in war-dress by my father's death-couch. Within the hour he sought ship for Palestine.

WILL. God! How is he then thy husband? A word spoke unknowing, by a maid-child, who knew not what word she spoke—a maid they penned after,

by her lord's command, in a convent prison, until that he cometh to teach her how life may be prison indeed? Cold? Old? Thrice wedded? How shall he call thee wife, who ne'er shall call thy heart? . . . Nay, thou art mine—mine, who can teach thee true love-lessoning, and wait in reverence till thou learnest that lesson! Come with me, now—now, mine own—mine heart's heart, . . . Come!

LADY J. Sayest thou so, in very truth? Thou, who art man and large, and true and wise? . . . Is it sooth that I who love thee—for even in this hour I do know I do love thee, Will, dear heart!—that I who love thee may fare forth with thee without blame, and God's stars give us welcome? . . . I know not—my lore is but what priests teach—be thou my beadsman, Greatheart comrade. Say yet once more of free heart, “Come!”—and I who love thee, follow thee over the rim of the world!

WILL. God sees . . . and I dare not say it!—God!—'Tis the end o' the way!

LADY J. I may not go?

WILL. For that thou art wife, who knowest not what wife may be, thou mayest not go. . . . Farewell!

LADY J. Wilt leave me, Will! . . . Nay, my heart faints—how is it strangely with me?

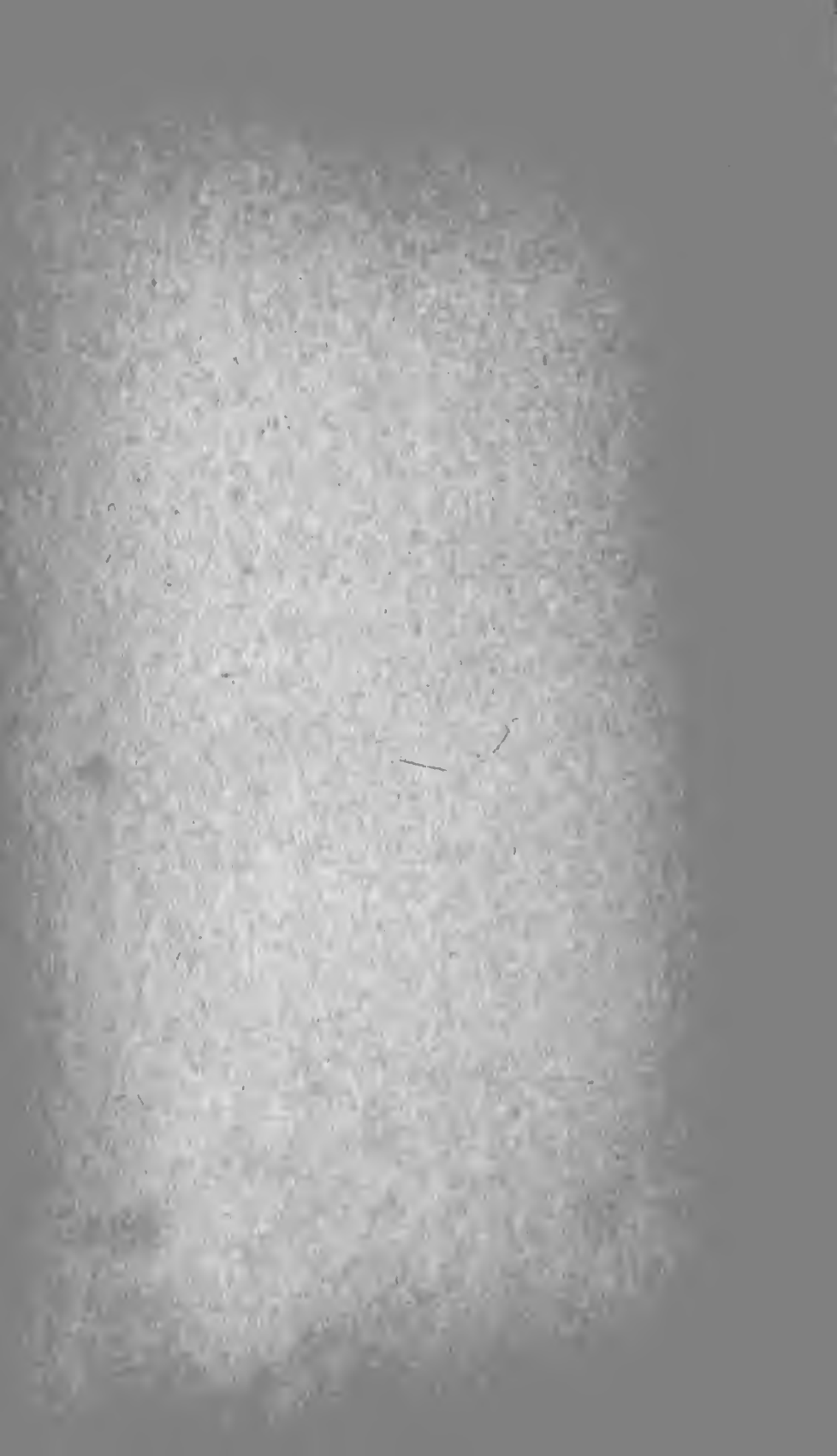
WILL. Would God I might teach thee that sweet why. I may not, Sweet—Sweet!—This I do tell

thee: Thou calledst in the dark wood, and God sent me to thy side. In any peril, any pain, let but thy soul call mine, and Hell's fetter cannot keep me from thee! To my heart once—once—that thou mayest know forever what love is! (*He catches her passionately to his breast, and kisses her long.*) Farewell!

(*He rushes out.*)

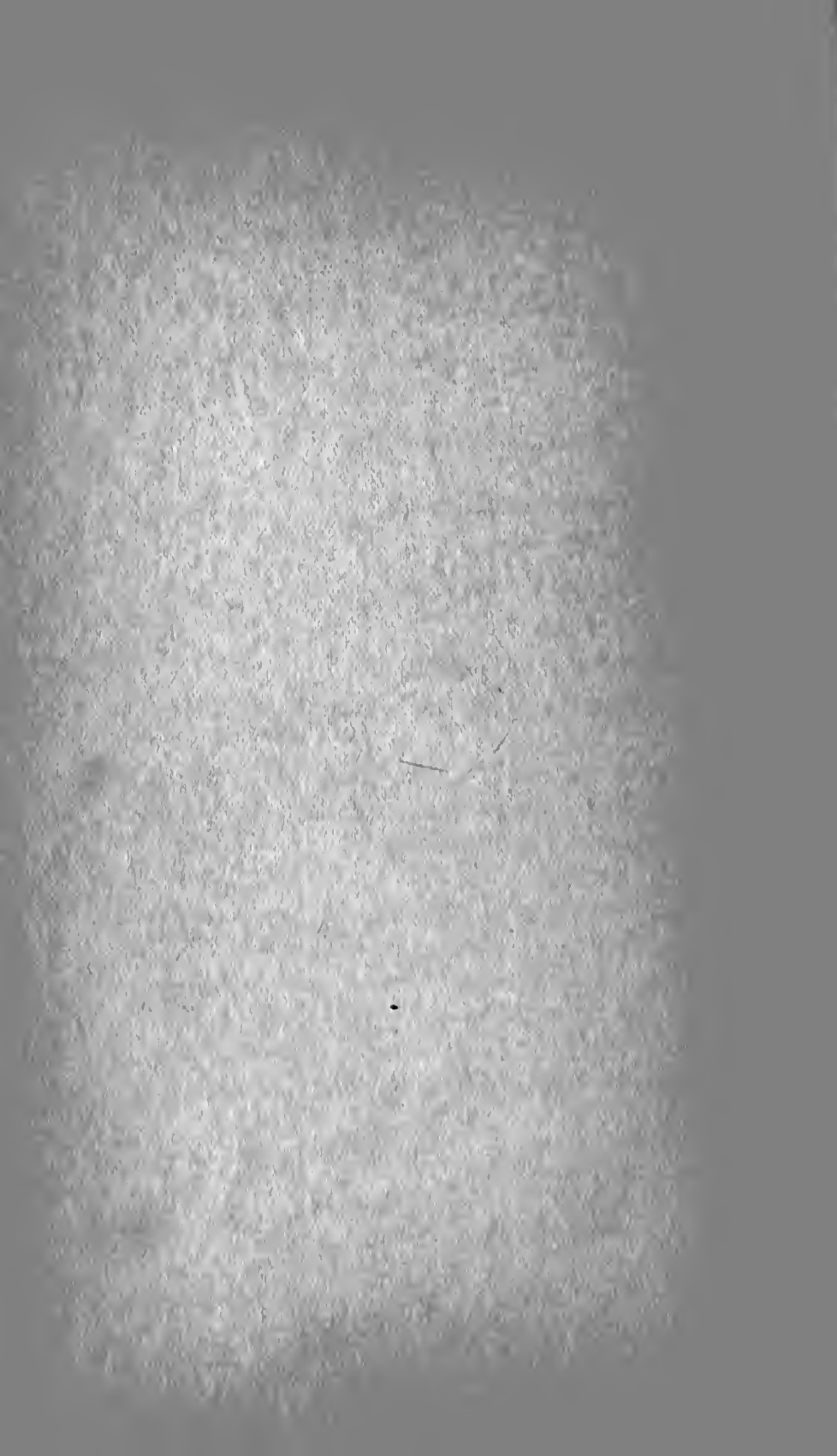
LADY J. (*She watches him go; a great and piteous trembling seizes her; she sinks into a chair with one thick sob.*) The end o' the way! . . . The end o' the way!

(CURTAIN.)



A COMEDIE ROYALL

BEING A FORGOTTEN EPISODE
OF ELIZABETH'S DAY.



A Comedie Royall

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ELIZABETH (Queen of England).

SIR JOHN HARTWYND.

ROYALL HARTWYND (his son).

SIR EDWARD AVIS.

LORD MORTIMER FARTHORNE.

PHYLLIDA FRENCH (Lady in waiting to Elizabeth).

The period is 1580. The place is England.
The scene is an audience-chamber of the palace.
The time is noon of an April day.

The scene is an audience-chamber, with carved fireplace, L. 3. Mullioned windows back, L. and R. Large entrance-door, back, centre covered with tapestried hangings. A throne-like chair, on a dais, R. 3. A carved table, L. C. with chairs on either side. Curtain-music, any Elizabethan air. As the cur-

tain rises, Elizabeth stands upon the dais, having apparently arisen from the throne in haste and anger. Phyllida stands a little to L. of dais with face hidden in her hands. Royall Hartwynd stands back in shadow of curtains of window L. back. Avis, Farthorne and John Hartwynd stand grouped by door back, centre, as if about to leave the chamber.

ELIZABETH. Nay, Lords, not yet! Quit not our chamber here,
Till that there buzz into the ears o' ye
A somewhat, that may sting ye into grace
Of fair and seemlier manners! 'Od's my life!
Is this our audience-chamber where ye stand,
Or is't our apery?

AVIS. Your Majesty—
Your Gracious Majesty,—we meant not,—we——
ELIZABETH. You meant not! 'S' Death! You meant not. Harkye now!
Hell's aristocracy, my Lord, is built
Of men that "meant not!" Here, with leave, my Lords,
Here in our audience-chamber, you beguile
An hour or twain, in royal company;
Claims such a privilege no dignity?
What dignity show ye? 'Fore Heaven I swear
Ye show your Queen the dignity of apes
That scent a jest to feed a grin, withal,

In every wind that blows!

Maid Malapert—

(Phyllida, whom the Queen indicates, takes her hands from before her tear-stained face, and makes a gesture of timid and supplicating deference toward the Queen.)

A baby sheep, from country sheep-fold new,
Bleats out, responding to an idle word,
A sheep's own answer;—and to every lip
Straight leaps an apish grin!—To all save one!
Where passed the lad? Where's Royall Hartwynd?

SIR JOHN.

Ah!

Your Majesty, my son but drew apart,
Fearing the scathe of that celestial wrath
That in your eyes doth wither up men's souls.

ELIZABETH. Celestial wrath? Celestial fire o' tow!
The Tudor wrath ne'er drew its heat, my Lord,
From any fire of Heaven!—Heard you not?
I bade call Royall Hartwynd!

(Sir John crosses to window L. back, and summons Royall from its curtained recess.)

SIR JOHN.

Please your Grace,

I plead that this my son did stand apart——

ELIZABETH. Did "stand apart!" 'Od's blood!

'Twould seem, my Lord,

The royal hangman late had quartered him

So in your speech your son doth "stand apart!"
Young Royall Hartwynd,

(Royall advances to C. and makes profound obeisance.)

stand forth in our sight,
An only man, encompassed round with apes!
Alone you smiled not, when this lambling here,
This saltless egg of country innocence

(Phyllida gives a choking, hysterical sob.)
Brought booby blundering of country phrase
To woo the grins of her Queen's apery!

ROYALL. Your Majesty, I saw no food for jest
In the poor phrase of this poor maiden here,
Nor saw I jest in—aught that followed it!

ELIZABETH. *(Descending from dais.)* Young
sir, when churchly service claims your powers,
(For this, your father hath acquainted me
Your life to churchly use is dedicate)
Our word for 't, in your loyal gravity
The church will be the gainer.

(She extends her hand, which Royall, kneeling, kisses. She then passes towards doors, back, centre. Turning, she addresses Phyllida.)

ELIZABETH. Harkye, wench!
Since presently we have a word for you

Bide here till 'tis our pleasure to return.
The country sheep-fold calls its country sheep;
To-morrow's dawn shall speed you back to it!

(To the men.)

My lords, the keeper of our apery
Keeps ever room behind its gilded bars
For any ape unhousen!

(Exit Elizabeth, through door back centre, all making profound reverences. As the doors close after Elizabeth, Phyllida bursts into low hysterical sobbing, and rushes across room to window L. back, where she throws herself on her knees by its cushions, with face hidden. As the men come forward, Royall goes quietly back and draws the curtains before her.)

FARTHORNE. Hell's flame! That a man must take such words from a woman! The sting of her cuts sharp to the heart!

AVIS. Good Cousin, let your wits whisper there's that in the Tower yonder cuts sharper than a woman's speech. A lucky sharpness, i' faith, whose sting falls not here (*Indicates neck.*) but here! (*Hand on heart with mock sigh.*)

SIR JOHN. By'r Lady, ay! Our royal mistress hath drawn from bluff King Hal, with much else, the trick to make a jest not of the royal jesting—a bird of price to him that jests that jest!

AVIS. Yet was the jest worth all it cost—'od's body was it! E'en the apes she aped us must have grinned, when—"Red, your Majesty!" quoth Maid Innocence,—(*Chokes with laughter. Royall at window L. draws curtains closer.*)—and she—the Queen—— (*Laughs again.*)

FARTHORNE. So thought not our young Master Parson yonder! Zounds! Wisely choose you, old Sir John, to shear those love-locks 'neath a churchly hat! "No food for jest!" cants he!

(*Royall comes down to C.*)

AVIS. Young Master Parson! Young Master Saint! Harkye, Gentlemen! (*Indicates Royall with profound salutation.*) Here struts Saint Royall, newly sainted by her sainted Majesty, of not too saintly speech!

(*Avis and Farthorne laugh.*)

ROYALL. My lords, 'tis not with royalty alone a jest may be driven past the road of safety. Faith, 'tis no psalm book swings here at my side; (*Touches sword.*) and the sole church that yet holds vow of mine, is the church militant!

(*Avis and Farthorne clap their hands to their swords.*)

SIR JOHN. I pray you, gentlemen—son Royall,

hold your peace! The Queen's Majesty may not yet have passed so far but that——

FARTHORNE. Nay, no farther—swear me on the rood!—than to her tiring glass, there to fling loose the locks that gentle Spenser glorifies.

AVIS. And—"What poor color give you then to these my locks?" saith she, and those her 'tiring maids, less innocent than our poor Maid Innocence, cry, "Color? By'r lady; as the minted gold they shine!"

(Avis and Farthorne take up their plumed hats and move backward toward doors.)

FARTHORNE. As sunbeams, making light a shady world! *(Laughs.)*

AVIS. As flashing wings of golden butterflies! *(Laughs.)*

FARTHORNE. As sunrise shimmer on a saffron sea! *(Laughs.)*

AVIS. As the new aureole of our fighting saint! *(Indicates Royall.)*

FARTHORNE. Say rather coxscomb of Saint Peter's cock, that clarions a denial of saintliness! *(Flings open the doors.)*

ROYALL. I' faith the Queen's menagerie's afoot—St. Peter's cock, saluting the Queen's apes! *(Bows profoundly.)*

FARTHORNE. S'death, young sir! *(Hand on sword).*

AVIS. Peace, Cousin! Open doors be open ears to drink in words. Dame Caution bids—best speak not! Give ye god-den, Sir John and young Sir Parson!

(Farthorne and Avis exeunt. Doors close behind them.)

ROYALL. Young Sir Parson! Zounds, father, that word must hound me down no more! No parson I, nor ever will be parson!

SIR JOHN. “Never!” saith the yearling calf i’ the stall! Heaven’s wrath, boy! I——

ROYALL. That ever I should live to hear the doughty Sir John Hartwynd dubbed begetter of calves!

SIR JOHN. Your tongue behind your teeth, sir! With preferment clear before you as ne’er till this day dawned—he’ll be no parson, saith he! A beggarly sixth son of a father so crippled in estate, that scarce he goes fit doubleted to court.

ROYALL. Nay, father, when a single doublet wastes, as yours, the whole fruit of a loom——
(Indicates Sir John’s portly paunch.)

SIR JOHN. Hold peace, I say! Or, by the Lord I’ll birch your parsonship! All my six sons save you, afoot and afloat to the world’s end, chasing that fleet-foot jade, Dame Fortune,—and you, forsooth, would make calf-run after them, and leave

mine age a sunless day indeed, for that I have no son!

ROYALL. Nay, father, an' I could serve you here, save under churchly colors——

SIR JOHN. How else? A simple knight, I have scant word at court! Parson or naught, when seeking for preferment!

ROYALL. Father, never Hartwynd yet swore fealty to a sovereign's banner, when in his heart of hearts he waited but his foeman's trumpet-call to be his foeman's slave.

SIR JOHN. What driveling is this?

ROYALL. So would it be if I swore service to the church while my young blood beat this world's battle-call! I tell you, father, this the blood you poured into my veins stalks not to music of a priestly psalm, but dances to an April roundelay! I say you nay! Not for preferment, not for place or gold, a Hartwynd e'er pledged caitiff service to a king; and ask me not—for God's life! I say nay! To pledge such service to the King of Kings!

SIR JOHN. (*Gasping with rage.*) A Bedlam! A Bedlam! Bring the cords and whip! And she, your Queen, so praised within the hour your churchmanship to be, my old heart biggened with the dream I'd see you yet Her Majesty's privy chaplain!

ROYALL. Privy chaplain! I! Good my father, wear I not yet some poor rags of innocence, that you

should scruple not to bid me list confessions of our Virgin Queen!

SIR JOHN. A jackanapes! A malapert! A murrain on your insolence!

ROYALL. Nay, father—no churchman I! Nay, I say! No churchman's prayer goes up from these my lips, save one—and that, the holy monk's who suplicated thus: "Heaven send me virtue! But,—not yet!"

SIR JOHN. (*Moving toward door.*) Now harkye, Sirrah, and mark well my words!—
If from your Bedlam mood you turn you not,
To godly ways and meek obedience,
If my sixth son follow the other five,
I'll—ring a country wench within a month,

(*Indicates putting a ring on wedding finger.*)

And within ten, I'll have a seventh son!

(*Exit, in haste and wrath.*)

ROYALL. (*Laughing.*) A son of his—Heaven's grace!—*his* son a parson! They're gone at last! And now for the one parson's trick of which I'm master—comfort of the afflicted, by'r Lady!—when affliction looks through dew-wet violet eyes, affliction's comfort is sweet ministry!

(*He crosses to the closed curtains of window, L. back.*)

ROYALL. Fair Mistress French! (*There is no answer.*) Sweet Mistress Phyllida! (*The curtains faintly stir.*) Nay, then, my little sweetheart! I pray you come you forth!

(*Phyllida comes forth from curtains, arranging her hair and coif, which are in some disorder; she draws long sighing breaths as she speaks, and from time to time dries her eyes.*)

PHYLLIDA. She hath gone, Master Hartwynd? 'Tis safe and sure, she hath gone?

ROYALL. Master me no master, dear and fair my maid! From thy lips "Parson" were scarce hatefuller!

PHYLLIDA. 'Tis sure she's gone.

ROYALL. Ay, hath she! There's no other queen bides here than this, the little queen of my poor heart!

(*He kisses her hand.*)

PHYLLIDA. Queen? Nay, 'twas not queen, that name the queen did name me! 'Twas "sheep" quoth she! 'Twas "malapert" quoth she! 'Twas "saltless egg," quoth she! (*Weeps again.*) You heard? Ay! All the world heard, so rang her voice through all the world!

ROYALL. I heard. Od's body! And I saw! And when her swinging hand laid buffet on that rose-

leaf cheek of thine,—Heaven's grace!—'twas then, as saith Sir John, I "stood apart," lest I should speak to England's Queen what Englishman speaks not to any woman!

PHYLLIDA. (*Rubbing her cheek.*) Her swinging hand! I' faith, 'tis marvel any woman's hand hath such a swing! Methought our old cow Cloversides had lifted her hoof against me!

ROYALL. When I had buffets as a lad—an' faith Sir John ne'er spared them!—'twas my mother's gentle wont to medicine them by a simple magic—shall I show thee?—Thy mother is not here to comfort thee (for which mercy I give thanks) so sure 'tis but my duty—— (*Gently kisses her cheek.*)

PHYLLIDA. (*Nestling to him.*) Sure, 'tis quaint medicine!

ROYALL. 'Tis medicine that as the parson saith 'Tis blessedder to give than to receive!

(*Lifts her face and kisses her lingeringly on the lips.*)

PHYLLIDA. (*Releasing herself.*) Nay, sir, the hurt reached not my lips!

ROYALL. 'Tis well the healing should outrun the hurt!

But heart o' me! Here is a hurt indeed That doth outrun all healing!

PHYLLIDA. Nay, it puzzles me sore why all this

evil should be. Here sat the Queen a-jesting with the lords,—I heard them not, I did but gaze at thee!—and of a sudden saith Her Majesty,—“Out of the mouths of babes! The maid shall speak! What color, child, be these poor locks of mine?” Then said I——

ROYALL. “Red!” Heaven’s footstool! “Red,” said you!—When of all colors on Heaven’s footstool, red is the hue she’d least her locks should be!

PHYLLIDA. But red God made them,—and ’tis red they are!

ROYALL. The reason of all reasons, dear my maid, why thou shouldst not say red!

PHYLLIDA. (*Sobs.*) O me! O me! When I was but a little maid at home, they beat me sore for e’en a little lie; and now I’m maid-in-waiting at the court, they cuff me that I tell not monstrous ones!

ROYALL. See you, love, God rules the country,—or measurably He rules it; but the court a goddess rules; a goddess none too godly! But the mischief’s done—what comes? ’Od’s life! What comes?

PHYLLIDA. Naught comes—all goes! I go! Heard you not so? “Sheep to her country sheep-fold!” quoth the Queen!—“We speed you thence, ere yet to-morrow dawns!” I pack me home to Devon!

ROYALL. Thou lovest Devon?

PHYLLIDA. Love Devon! That do I! Ah! but

its fields are green! But what I love not is the man who waits me there,—the man they'll wed me to.

ROYALL. By Peter's death! They'll wed thee?

PHYLLIDA. So swore my step-dame. "An' thou win not grace at court," quoth she, "the hour that sees thee back, will speed thee on thy way to church, there to be sealed fourth bride of old Squire Hunbers, who hath bid for thee!" Ah, Heaven 'fend me! He hath eyebrows like a pent-house, and his hands are rough and big, with hairs that curl and creep—ugh! (*Shudders.*) And his kiss——

ROYALL. (*Takes her in his arms.*) His kiss?

PHYLLIDA. Were not—like thine! (*Hides her face against his breast.*)

ROYALL. They shall not send thee back! Sooner we'll take the road, a wandering gypsy pair, with love for food and stars to warm us by! But how win back the favor of the Queen?

PHYLLIDA. If she but loved thee as I love thee, thy sole pleading would suffice.

ROYALL. She loves me not . . . and yet! A thought, my maid! The Virgin Queen loves no man; yet they say that virgins, queens or no, do love men's love; the more when years have shut the gates that bar the virgin from men's love . . . I know not, I! My father bred me for a parson!

PHYLLIDA. But thou dost not love her? (*Her lips quiver.*)

ROYALL. Nay, Maid Innocence! I love as every loyal English heart must love the mighty Queen whose reign hath rained down peace and glory on our isle; but man to woman . . . Sweet, thou knowest the color of her hair,—as thou saidst but now of thine old suitor's kiss,—'tis not like thine!

PHYLLIDA. How then?

ROYALL. Leave all to me! Love, we'll play comedy, with love as prize, and love as prompter too. Nay—thou needst do naught! Ope not those hedge-rose lips, lest country truth pop out again, and straight undo us both! Say "yes!"—if I say "Is't!" Say "Nay" when I say, 'Twas not so!" Naught else! Hist! Methinks the Queen is here!

PHYLLIDA. Yet see I not——

ROYALL. Seek not to see! 'Tis yea or nay from thee! Naught else! Guard thee! Naught else!

(He leads her to fireplace, and moves several paces away from her. She runs toward him.)

PHYLLIDA. Love! Have I vexed thee!

ROYALL. Zounds! Back to place, Maid Innocence!

(She hesitatingly and apparently much bewildered and woe-begone, moves back to the opposite side of the fireplace. He gives a quick leap across and snatches a kiss, leaping back.)

ROYALL. Thou vex me, Rose o' Spring! Nay—

cans't thou understand? 'Tis comedy! We play an hour at comedy!

(The doors are flung open, and Elizabeth enters. She does not for the moment see Royall and Phyllida at the fireplace.)

ELIZABETH. Now, by my halidom!
'Tis rare we've tasted such a cup of sack!
Our humor's warm with it!

(Sees Royall and Phyllida.)

What have we here?
Our maid disgraced, in gossip with our parson?
They note me not.

(Passes, moving quietly to seat on dais.)

ROYALL. Alack, kind Mistress French,
That ever my rash word should draw you down
Our sovereign's high displeasure! (Weep! 'Tis safe!)

(Phyllida weeps.)

ELIZABETH. His word, quoth he! There is a
riddle here!

ROYALL. When she demanded of thee, unaware,
The color of those glorious locks of hers,
What wonder if there swam up in thy thought
The color thou had'st heard me name so oft,
As of all hues, most royal!

ELIZABETH. Well said I

The lad hath parts. The church shall give him up.
'Twere waste to make him parson!

ROYALL.

Red! God's rood!

It is the color of the sunset skies
When that they flame most glorious; 'tis the hue
Of all things rich and vital,—nay, the blood
That feeds the heart,—what is that blood but red?
It is the color of the flag that floats
Above the noblest land God's red sun sees;
Then fitly lends its color to the locks
Of God, His mightiest woman!

ELIZABETH.

Parson, he!

He hath a tongue would grace an Emperor!

PHYLLIDA. Yet saidst thou not when late we
stood alone——

ROYALL. (Zounds! Wilt not weep?) (*She weeps.*)

Such words as these, mine heart
Hath oft poured forth into thine innocent ears,
To ease that secret of tormenting love
To none save thee confided.

ELIZABETH.

Love, said he?

ROYALL. The poor, mad fool who dares to lift his
eyes

Unto the shrine of her who is his Heaven
Must look to meet the fate of Phaëton
Death-scorched by too near splendor;—ay, the fate
Of moth, that circling inward to the flame

Dies, by that flame consumed. E'en so am I,
 I die of love for her I may not love,—
 The Queen who may love no man!

*(Dashes his hand across his eyes, as though
 to stanch tears.)*

PHYLLIDA. When you weep
 Must I weep still?

ROYALL. (Stanch not your tears an instant!)

ELIZABETH. *(Rising.)* Young Royall Hartwynd,
 thou hast yet to learn

That every Queen's a woman!

ROYALL. *(Turning and falling on his knee.)*
Fire of Heaven!

The Queen! My shame consumes me!

PHYLLIDA. Didst not know
 The Queen was here? Why I——

*(He turns over his shoulder at her a glare of
 desperate appeal. She falls to weeping again.)*

ELIZABETH. Again I say
 The Queen's a woman. Such a love as thine
 Makes woman thrice a Queen. Rise, sir, and stand
 Fearless before me. Ay! Beside me, sir!

*(Royall rises from his knee. Phyllida ceases
 to weep and stares at them in terrified aston-
 ishment.)*

God's body! Am I slave, or England's Queen?

And if a Queen, then Queen o'er mine own love
 To give it where I will. If 'twere our whim,
 Nay, 'twere our royal purpose, to command
 A commoner be King Consort—by the rood
 Were, by that grace, the commoner not a king?
 Sir, of all loves that e'er have cried on me,
 Yours, crying as you thought, unheard of me,
 Out of a man's heart, most hath kindled me.
 Fear not to stand before me.

ROYALL. (*Approaching nearer, again kneels.*)
 Nay, your grace, my place is here. (Moreover,
 presently,
 If right I read signs of yon April face
 My place will be before the headsman's block!)

PHYLLIDA. O Love, forgive me!

(Rushes madly to Royall. He rises and with manly dignity stands before her, as if to protect her from the Queen's wrath. She falls on her knees, catching and weeping over his hand.)

O my poor, poor love,
 What bitter end to our poor comedy!
 She'll marry thee! The Queen will marry thee!

ROYALL. Wits serve me now! Or else farewell
 the head
 My whirling wits inhabit!

ELIZABETH.

Comedy!

What bleats this lamb o' Bedlam? Comedy?
'Od's saints and devils, sir——

ROYALL. Your Majesty,
The comedy is over. Naught remains
But for the Player-queen,—a queen indeed
Of players, as she is a queen of queens—
To speak our fate, speaking its epilogue.

ELIZABETH. A queen—of players?

ROYALL. Aye, as queen in all.
Your Grace's queenly eyes that naught can film
Read the poor subterfuge, whereby young love
Sought 'scape from cruel parting—punished it
By stooping from the throne to act a part
Brought our parts to confusion!

(Will she take?

Would I'd turned parson ere that I turned player!)

ELIZABETH. (*After a pause, in which she has
studied his immovable face; faintly and sar-
donically smiling.*)

Your queen, young sir, is player, e'en in this,—
She sometimes takes a cue . . . You say the truth—
The comedy is done. The Player-queen
Must get her to her throne, to yawn away

(*Mounts dais.*)

The queenly days, which, when love visiteth
'Tis but as mummer, mumming comedy!
Get you to church! Nay, not as parson, sir!

Too many parsons now go mumming it.
We'll have no more. Get you to church, I say,
To kneel, with her, yon Devon lamb o' grace
This side the altar-rails. God guard you then!
'Tis like, were sovereign less soft than we,
Her bridegroom's head would bride-bed pillow find
Upon the headsman's block.

ROYALL. Your Majesty,
A man must e'en rejoice to lay his head
Beside so fair a little head as this,
Whate'er that fair head's pillow.

ELIZABETH. Get you hence!
The sack that warms the humor of our blood
Lends not its warmth forever. Get you hence!
But first—your sword!

*(Comes down from dais, holding out her
hand imperatively.)*

ROYALL. My sword! Your Majesty!
God knoweth sword and life your forfeit be.
But—let my father's name and service plead
Against this black disgrace!—My life, O Queen!
But not my sword! God's breath! Break not my
sword!

ELIZABETH. Your sword! 'Od's body! To your
knee again.
Lest we do say—your life!

PHYLLIDA. Ah! Mercy, Madam!

(Royall hands her his sword, first kissing its blade. She motions him to kneel. He obeys. She strikes him lightly on the shoulder with the sword.)

ELIZABETH. Rise up, Sir Royall Hartwynd, belted knight!

(He springs up with a gesture of ecstasy.)

Take back thy sword: there's land shall mate with it.
And guard thy lands, and guard thy mate and young:
And guard thine England, and thine England's
Queen,

So long as hand and sword have strength to meet!

ROYALL. Once more I say . . . and hear me
King of Kings! . . .

My shamed soul speaks! . . . I kneel your knight
and slave . . .

God's mightiest of women . . . and my Queen!

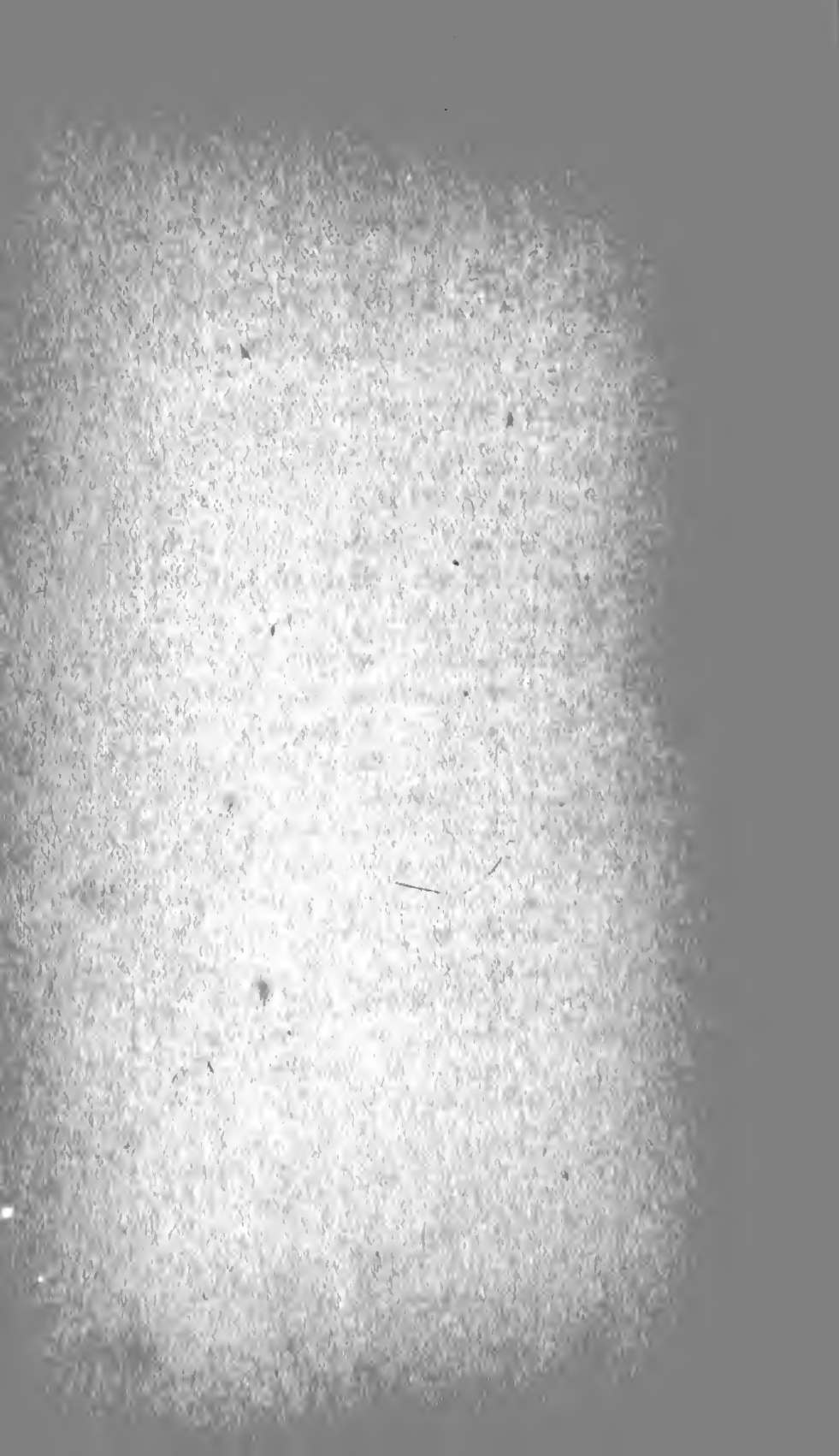
(Elizabeth permits him to kiss her hand, looking down upon him with a wistful smile. Then she motions Phyllida to approach. She gives Phyllida to Royall's arms. Elizabeth moves slowly down the room toward the doors. looking back, she says, with a light sigh.)

ELIZABETH. Nay! When the man, and not the
courtier speaks,
My Lord, another claims that name from you!

(CURTIAN.)

A BIT OF INSTRUCTION

A LITTLE COMEDY



A Bit of Instruction

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

JACK DESPARD, of the Thalia Company.

MERTOUN NEWBURY, of the Best Society.

The time is the present. The scene is the bachelor apartment of Jack Despard. The time is half-past twelve, of a mid-winter night.

The scene is the bachelor sitting-room, of Jack Despard's lodgings. It is comfortably, even luxuriously furnished, in the manner of a bachelor's "den." There is a large divan, with cushions: a fireplace, R., with a bright fire:—low bookcases, well filled: lounging-chairs:—a table strewn with magazines, etc. The walls are hung with water-color sketches, pipe racks, etc. As the curtain rises, Newbury is discovered, asleep in a large arm-chair, before the fire. The chair is partly concealed from any one entering, by a screen. After a second's pause, Jack enters. He comes in, somewhat wearily. He wears a handsome, fur-lined coat. He does not see Newbury: his atten-

tion being concentrated on the fact that, in addition to the lamp, three gas-jets are in full flame.

JACK. Well, upon my soul! My landlady will land me in the insolvency court, if I don't get a raise of salary, presently. Does the woman think I'm running a torchlight parade?

(Newbury has awaked at the first sound of Jack's voice, and is sitting sleepily up. Jack sees him.)

JACK. Why, I beg your pardon, Mr. —Newbury, is it?

NEW. Yes; Newbury—Mertoun Newbury, you know.

JACK. With a hyphen?

NEW. I beg your pardon?

(During this scene, Jack is taking off his topcoat, warming his hands, changing his coat for a smoking-jacket, etc.)

JACK. When there isn't a hyphen, one name goes, you know. When there is, the two names are compulsory.

NEW. *(Stiffly.)* Mertoun is my Christian name. There is no hyphen.

JACK. Thanks.

(There is an awkward pause.)

NEW. You remember seeing me at the Club? We've met there several times, you know—the St. Dives Club.

JACK. Have we? O, I dare say; I didn't remember your face, for a moment, but one sees such a kaleidoscope of faces, you know, in a season.

(Another awkward pause.)

NEW. *(Rather explosively.)* Late to-night, aren't you?

JACK. Yes; rather. Why?

NEW. O, I've been waiting an hour or so, I fancy. That's how I dropped off—the room was so warm.

JACK. If I had known of your visit——

NEW. O, that's all right. I didn't know myself that I was coming. Just decided to, on the jump, you know.

JACK. Yes?

NEW. Yes. Thought I'd find you in about half-past eleven, perhaps.

JACK. So you would, if the business-manager hadn't brought around an infernal pile of photographs for me to sign, for the souvenir matinee. Strange what asses some business managers are.

NEW. Autographed photographs, eh? Great idea, that. Pull in matinee-girls by the hundred, I dare say.

JACK. I dare say—— *(Yawns.)* I beg your

pardon, but I'm rather done up. It is late, as you say—and matinee day.

NEW. I always supposed you play-actor chaps must rather revel in matinee days.

JACK. Do you know any fellows who like working double time? If you do, I'll bet a tenner they're not in our line of work.

NEW. Well, but aren't the matinees the really interesting days? Fancy playing to an audience of adorers.

JACK. If they're adorers, they conceal it skillfully. I'd about as soon start out with Nansen, in search of a chill, as play to a matinee audience.

NEW. The matinee maids must keep their warmth for their letters, then, eh?

JACK. Bosh! When the papers get out of sea-serpent specials they write up matinee letters. They're a myth, mostly; though now and then——

NEW. (*Rather eagerly.*) Yes? Now and then?

JACK. Well, now and then a fellow gets a letter that he'd like to enclose to a girl's mother, with a manual on "The Duties of Parents."

NEW. Bless you! Most of the mothers have letters of their own. The duties of parents are obsolete, except in manuals.

JACK. That view of it hadn't struck me. I don't do the society act enough to keep my morals up to date.

NEW. And the girls in your business,—I wager they're always getting letters you'd like to send to the chaps' fathers?

JACK. N-no. I think I should prefer to talk that sort of letters over with the chaps themselves.

(He takes a riding-whip from the table, as if absent-mindedly, and nervously plays with it.)

NEW. *(Indicating whip.)* With—accessories?

JACK. As you say—with accessories.

NEW. Wouldn't you have rather a chore, sometimes, you know? Rafts of the fellows who write 'em are working in the Gym. right along.

JACK. Yes. I've put on the gloves with them there, now and then.

NEW. There?

JACK. Of course. I learned my A B C's at Harvard, once on a time.

NEW. Harvard? Why, I didn't know——

JACK. No. I've managed to conceal the fact from our press-agent, up to date. Yes, I've put on the gloves in the old Gym. more times than a few. Great sport! I say, wouldn't you like to try a bout, now?

NEW. Now? Good Lord! No. What for?

JACK. O, nothing. I—I just thought you might feel like it. I felt like it. You don't mind my changing my shoes?

(*He leisurely exchanges boots for slippers.*)

You see, I've been doing a society part to-day; and I never did find tight boots compatible with repose of mind.

NEW. O, that's all right, Despard. By the way, —that reminds me to ask you something. We had a bet on, down at the Club to-night.

JACK. (*With polite boredom.*) Yes?

NEW. Yes. We were betting about your real name. Do you mind telling me what your real name is?

JACK. (*His exasperation is evidently growing tense. He opens his card-case, and hands Newbury his card.*) My card.

NEW. (*Reads.*) John Randolph Despard. O, but I didn't mean your stage name, you know.

JACK. Neither did I. My name's on that card. Is it necessary, to settle your Club bet, that I send to Virginia for my birth-certificate?

NEW. Great Scott! You're not one of the Despards of——

JACK. My people rode with Light-Horse Harry. Did you think all actors were raised from bulbs, in window-glasses?

NEW. Well, it's no wonder the matinee girls——

JACK. O, da—— bless the matinee girls. I say, Newbury, you didn't come here at this ungodly hour to talk about matinee girls, did you?

NEW. Well, yes—perhaps—in a way. You see, the fellows at the Club were saying that—that it would be a good joke to see one of the real—what one of those matinee letters really was like, don't you know.

JACK. (*Rising.*) And they thought I might give them the chance of finding out? I say, what paper are you reporting for, Newbury?

NEW. I? Reporting?

JACK. If you're not doing the sneak reporter act, what the devil are you doing?

(They face each other, in self-contained anger.)

NEW. Do you mind telling me what you mean by treating me as if I were an intrusive ass?

JACK. Do you mind telling me how else it would be appropriate for me to treat you?

NEW. Will you explain yourself?

JACK. How else would you treat a man who, on the strength of a Club introduction, wheels himself, uninvited, into your rooms, at midnight,—asks you whether your name is not an alias,—suggests that you can't make your hands keep your head,—winds up by inviting you to turn over to a parcel of Club loungers the confidence a silly girl or two have put in your decency?

NEW. Why,—I thought—being an actor,—Bohemia, you know, and all that——

JACK. You thought because actors sometimes have to sell their talents in a damned poor market, that we put up our private honor for sale at the same shop? That's a mistake; and you may find it a costly one.

NEW. (*After a short pause he peels off his right-hand glove, and offers his hand.*) Shake?

JACK. (*Amazed.*) Eh?

NEW. Shake—won't you? You have such a jolly, convincing way of putting things, I thought I'd like to shake hands with you, don't you know. O, I'm an ass, all right, Despard, and I'm a near-sighted ass; but when I do see a gentleman, I know the breed. I beg your pardon, Despard. Shake—will you?

(*They shake hands, heartily.*)

JACK. Have a cigar?

NEW. Thanks. (*They light cigars.*)

JACK. Sit down, won't you?

(*They sit.*)

JACK. (*Reaching across table.*) I say—Shake again, won't you? You see, Newbury, I've an infernal temper, and that's a fact.

NEW. O, that's all right. From your own standpoint, it was uncommonly kind of you not to pitch me down stairs. I say, one of the things I came in for, you know, was this: I want you to give me a bit of instruction.

JACK. Instruction isn't much in my line; but fire ahead.

NEW. I want to know if you'll teach me to act, you know.

JACK. To act? O, well, a little thing like that, you know! (*Looks at watch.*) Quarter to one. Do you think you could give me till half-past four? With a college education as a foundation, you know, you really ought,

NEW. Don't chaff. I'm in a beastly hole. You see, my cousin Ethel Marlborough—well, she really isn't my cousin, you know, but her mother married my uncle Jim.

JACK. If you could skip the Creation, old fellow, and come to the Deluge——

NEW. O, well, all right. You see, my cousin Ethel is getting up a fair.

JACK. I sympathize with her relations.

NEW. And she's determined to have one night of theatricals; and, hang it, you know, I've got to act.

JACK. I transfer my sympathy to your relations.

NEW. Yes; I've got to act, because there's only one Ferdinand costume, and I'm the only fellow it will fit.

JACK. "Ferdinand?" Great Shakespeare! You don't mean that you are going to tackle "The Tempest"?

NEW. O, but we are, then. You see, Ethel has

written a play, and we were going to give that; but she thought we didn't have time to do it justice, and we'd better do something from Shakespeare.

JACK. Well, perhaps he could bear it better. He's been dead a long time.

NEW. We're just going to do a scene or two, you know. Ethel has been wild to have a go at Miranda, ever since she saw Ada Rehan do her, you know.

JACK. Yes—naturally. And you're Ferdinand?

NEW. Yes. Damned hard luck, isn't it?

JACK. O, I don't know. As I said, the author has been dead a long time.

NEW. O, hang it! I say, don't chaff. I mean bad luck for me. But I can't quit. The costume is such a dizzy fit; and then, you know, Ethel's to do Miranda; and there are speeches that—well, you know, the family wouldn't like any one not a relation,

JACK. Such as a cousin by marriage.

NEW. O, it's just the same. She came into the family when she was in pinafores. And now, you see, I'm in for it; and I don't want to look a bigger fool than I can help.

JACK. You naturally wouldn't.—No.

NEW. And I thought you might be able to give me a leg up, in the log-rolling scene.

JACK. Log-rolling scene is good—sounds political.

NEW. Hang it. Don't chaff. Will you, or won't you?

JACK. O, I will—I will. If there is anything on earth I find soothing and refreshing, it is teaching an amateur. Want to start in now?

NEW. Might as well, eh?

JACK. Come — business, business. (*Pushes centre-table back, leaving clear space.*) Where's Shakespeare? (*Rummages among books on shelf.*)

NEW. Yes; you'd best have him handy. Ethel copied my part in her best Wellesley slant, and I've made out about one word in ten. (*Produces a much-crumpled manuscript.*)

JACK. Here we are—"Enter Ferdinand, with a log on his shoulder." Props—props; where's your log? (*Hands him Indian Club:—business of getting it poised on his shoulder.*) Come, now, Ferdinand, your lines—your lines.

NEW. "There be some spots are painful——"

(*He rubs shoulder.*)

JACK. Good Lord! What? Say that again.

NEW. "There be some spots are painful——"
That means his shoulder, doesn't it, where he's carrying logs? I supposed so; that's why I rubbed it.

JACK. The line happens to be, "There are some *sports* are painful——"

NEW. "Sports"—"Spots"? Hang Ethel's writing! I've learned that "spots"; and it's the only thing in the whole confounded speech I understood. I thought the beggar had lamed himself, piling up logs, don't you know? Hang it, Despard! He *says* he's lame. Doesn't he say he's piling up logs "upon a sore injunction"?

JACK. (*In ecstasies of laughter.*) O, read it that way—read it that way. A new reading is a precious thing, you know; and it's not much queerer than some of the new Juliets.

NEW. I say—Let's skip that speech, anyhow. What I really want to coach up on is that rigmarole he has to reel off to Miranda. They've run it all together for me, you know, because they say that if Miranda once stopped me I'd never get up steam again. Ethel won't have me in it at any price; she says I make love like a cigar-store Indian.

JACK. Apparently she has critical gifts. Fire away.

NEW. "O, my father. I've broke your head——"

JACK. Hold up! In the name of Stratford, what's the matter with your text?

NEW. (*Aggrievedly showing MS.*) Confound it, man, see for yourself. "O, my father, I've broke your head to——"

JACK. Man alive, that's the *cue*—that's *Miranda's* speech.

NEW. Well, why in Heligoland don't she say "cue"? And, besides, Miranda didn't break her father's head, did she?

JACK. Not according to Shakespeare. She says she "broke her father's hest"—her father's "hest"—behest—command, you know.

NEW. I wish she'd talk English, then. I don't care what it is, as long as I don't have to break it. (*Reads speech with queer effects of punctuation, and absolute incomprehension of sense, as—*)

"Admired Miranda—

Indeed the top of admiration worth—

What's dearest in the worldfull many a lady I have

I have eyed with best regard and many a time.

The harmony of their tongues.—Hath into bondage
Brought my too—too——"

something-or-other "ears for several virtues." (*Out of breath.*) Whew! How does the thing go on? I say, Despard, what gestures go with that kind of speech—eh?

JACK. On my soul, Newbury, I don't know.

NEW. Well, no matter; we can pick them out afterward. Let's see—O—

"I have liked several women? Never! with so full
soul

But some defect in her did quarrel;

But, O you! O you!—

JACK. Man—man!—stop it, can't you?

NEW. (*Bewildered and aggrieved.*) Stop what?

JACK. Stop the execution.

NEW. What execution?

JACK. I wonder if you have the least idea how that fellow felt?

NEW. What fellow?

JACK. Ferdinand.

NEW. Felt? Why, the chap wasn't a real chap, you know.

JACK. Man, he was realer than you or I; and he'll last a blamed sight longer. Put yourself in the fellow's place, can't you? That's what you've got to do—not stand up there like a graven image, reeling off lines out of a book. Can't you see them there,—him and the girl? It's morning, you know,—the sea's out there—(*New. turns bewilderedly to see where.*)—the sea, all shining in the sun;—and she's standing there,—just a girl, you know—just a girl—with a girl's eyes;—just a slip of a thing, all in white, her eyes as blue as the sea, and the white stuff falling back from her soft, pure little throat, and her yellow hair all blowing about in the sea-wind, . . .

NEW. (*In a daze.*) I say, will she look like that?

JACK. She *did* look like that,—she *will* look like that—thank God and Shakespeare—as long as youth is youth. And you stand there, worshiping her, and

aching for her;—and one minute you want to crush her—here—(*With a motion of straining a woman to his breast.*)—and the next, you want to grovel there at her little feet, and cry your heart out; and her big eyes are pitying you,—and something else—and she herself doesn't know what else—and it's going to be yours to teach her—yours, and no other man's on God's earth—and your heart just tears itself to your lips—and you say to her:

Admired Miranda—

Indeed the top of admiration,—worth
What's dearest in the world.—Full many a lady
I have eyed with best regard; and many a time
The harmony of their tongues hath into bondage
Brought my too diligent ear: for several virtues
Have I liked several women: never any
With so full soul, but some defect on her
Did quarrel with the noblest grace she owned,
And put it to the foil: but you,—O you,—
So perfect and so peerless, art created
Of every creature's best.—Hear my soul speak.
The very instant that I saw you did my heart
Fly to your service:—there——”

NEW. O, for God's sake—stop it, can't you?

JACK. (*In his turn bewildered.*) Stop what?

NEW. I can't stand it! O, I see now,—I understand it—she couldn't help it. Poor little Ethel—

she couldn't help it! And it—it may not be so bad. You're a gentleman—if you are an actor, you're a gentleman,—but if you don't—if you're not good to her,—by God—I——

JACK. (*In cold anger and amazement.*) Do you mind telling me, Newbury, what you are talking about?

NEW. Talking about?—I'm talking about my cousin Ethel.

JACK. Your cousin Ethel?

NEW. My cousin Ethel—the poor little girl who's been looking at you,—and you know it—who's been looking at you for weeks, with just such eyes as—as you said—my cousin Ethel—the girl who wrote you that letter that I——

JACK. On my honor, I don't know what you are talking about.

NEW. You don't know—my cousin Ethel?

JACK. I never saw nor heard of her in my life.

NEW. Why, man, you *must* have seen her. She's at every last matinee you play. She's the little girl with the yellow hair and the big blue eyes:—she's only eighteen;—she always has a bunch of violets pinned to her seal-skin muff;—she's always eating sugared things, out of a silver filigree box. Why, do you mean to say——

JACK. I mean to say, my dear fellow, that I suppose at a hundred or so matinees a year there are a

hundred or so such girls; and I never saw one of them.

NEW. But you said you never had heard of her; and she signed her full name to that letter she sent you; she told Kit so.

JACK. What letter?

NEW. She told my sister Kit about it. Kit told me. She's no sneak, Kit; she's an awfully good sort; but she's older than Ethel; and she was scared blue when Ethel told her she'd sent that letter. You know, old chap, there are actors—that——

JACK. O, yes,—I know. They're the kind that get into the newspapers.

NEW. And she thought—Ethel did—she told Kit she knew—that you were all the time playing just to her—like Garrick did, you know, to Ada Ingot;—and she wrote to you and said that she—that if you——

JACK. Poor little girl! She wrote that? Poor little girl! Where's her mother?

NEW. She died two years ago.

JACK. Poor little girl! I say, do you know when she sent that letter, Newbury?

NEW. Yesterday morning. She told Kit, last night.

JACK. Yesterday? I remember. (*Opens table drawer.*) I remember. I brought home a pocketful of things; and I was so fagged, I fired them all in

here, and then cold forgot them. (*He gathers up a number of letters, from drawer, and holds them all out, to Newbury.*) Do you mind seeing—if——

(*Newbury, after a moment's search, selects one, and holds it out to him.*)

JACK. There's the fire.

(*Newbury slowly goes to fireplace, and thrusts the letter into the coals. Both men stand silently watching it burn.*)

NEW. (*Gripping Jack's hand hard.*) Thanks, old chap. You—I—O, damn it, you know what I mean. Thanks, old chap. You see, I've known her ever since she was in pinafores, and—I—(*Dashes his hand across his eyes, and finishes, chokingly.*)—I—— Thanks, old chap.

JACK. O, that's all right, Newbury. And—look here,—it'll be all right,—you'll see. All girls dream dreams. It'll be all right.

NEW. (*He puts on his coat, and prepares to go out, as he speaks.*) I—I'd like to—but I can't;—you know, don't you, Despard? (*He crosses to Jack, hesitatingly.*) I'm an ass to ask you, I know—but you don't suppose,—if you ever did meet her—hang it—she's such a dear little thing.

JACK. (*Opens a locket that hangs at his watch-chain, and holds it up.*) See that? Well, that is the little girl I'm going to marry, if ever the Lord

and the managers let us stay in the same town long enough. Satisfied?

NEW. Why, I know that face, don't I? Yes. By Jove, that's Maisie Marston, of the——

JACK. Yes, that is *Miss* Marston.

NEW. (*Musingly.*) Maisie Marston—Why, she's the one, when I was in Yale, two years ago——

JACK. (*With a dryness of voice.*) Yes; she's the one. She showed me that letter you wrote her.

NEW. (*Aghast.*) She—showed you—that letter?

JACK. Yes. She's a way of showing me—all her letters of that sort.

NEW. (*After a pause, strips off both his coats.*) It's all I can do, old chap,—you know,—but if you like, I'll stand up to you, without the gloves.

JACK. Put on your coat. Two years are two years. And, as you say, you were only an ass.

NEW. (*Fervently.*) Thanks, old chap! (*He puts on his coat and starts to go. In doorway.*) Good-night, Despard.

JACK. Good-night. O, I say, Newbury! If you're hereabout to-morrow night, look in, won't you, and we'll have another go at Ferdinand.

NEW. Why,—if I may,—why, thanks, old chap!

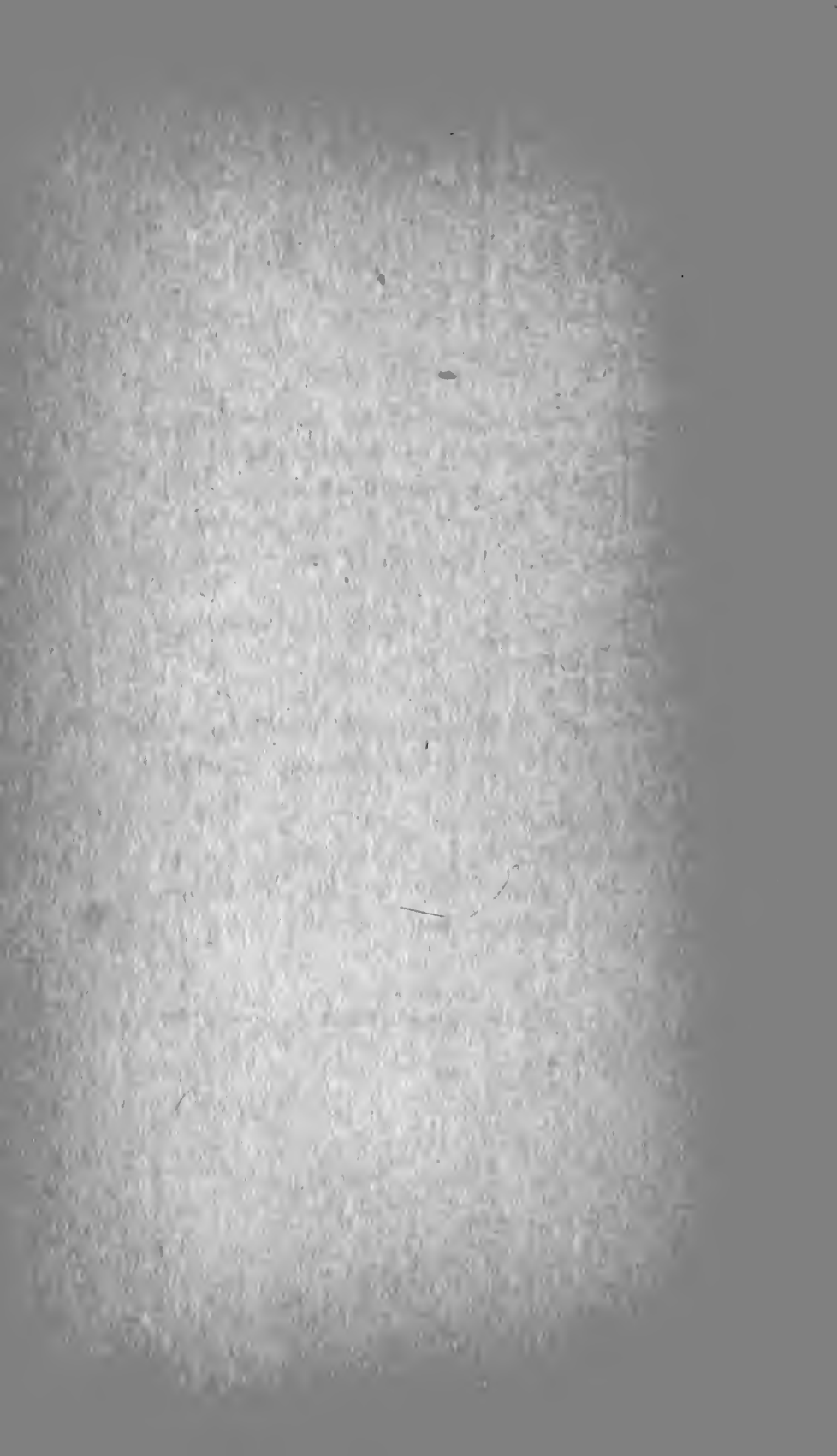
(*Newbury goes out. Despard follows him to door: calls "Find your way, all right?" Newbury's voice answers from below, "O, yes,*

thanks." The lower door closes. Despard closes his own door. He blows out the lamp, leaving only the red glow of the firelight. He crosses slowly to the mantel, and stands looking down into the fire. After a moment's pause, he opens the locket, and stands looking down, musingly, on the pictured face.

(CURTAIN.)

A SONG AT THE CASTLE

A ROMANTIC COMEDY
IN ONE ACT



A Song at the Castle*

CHARACTERS.

CORNWALLIS, Viceroy of Ireland, and Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in Ireland.

DESMOND O'MOIRNE, a young Irish singer.

COL. HUMPHREY MORTON, of the British army.

SIR RICHARD WILDE, Member of the English Parliament.

MARQUIS RAOUL DE LA VALIERE, an exiled nobleman of France.

A SERVANT.

LADY WYNDHAM, a widow, sister to Lord Cornwallis.

EILEEN FITZGERALD, the ward of Lord Cornwallis.

Time: Early evening of a night in July, 1798.

Place: Dublin Castle; the state drawing-room.

The curtain, rising, discovers Lady Wyndham, in a stately reception-gown; and a servant, at the door, announcing—

*This play was written in collaboration with Percy Wallace Mackaye.

“The Marquis de la Valière.”

VALIERE. (*Entering and bowing.*) Madame, your ladyship’s most humbly obedient. Your ladyship, it fears me, I am arrived—Je vous prie milles pardons—early, un peu. But one has informed me that this was the hour——

LADY W. You are most welcome and waited for, Marquis. This is the time.

VALIERE. Merci, Madame, and your—your ladyship’s daughter——

LADY W. Not my daughter, nor my anything, thank Heaven! That wilful girl, who is my brother’s ward! Lady Eileen will be with us in a moment. And this is for her?

VALIERE. (*Who has been obsequiously proffering a small, silver-bound box.*) For Mademoiselle Eileen, Madame, with birthday gratulations. They are mere nothings, mere diamonds; they cannot speak my admirations; but if your ladyship shall add one look to brighten them!—Ah, speak well for me to the young lady un seul mot, I—Pardieu! Madame, I die in English, but I will live most gratefully in French!

LADY W. I should be too glad to speak in your behalf, if it were possible. But Lud! Marquis, such a girl! Like a firefly on the breeze, now a sparkle, then whiff! and away again. She’s just a fancy caught in the flesh. And fancy that nothing would

do, but she must settle this most serious, most momentous question of the giving of her hand, on her birthday; and she must give out that fate may decide it, according to the gifts her suitors bring—the romantic minx—and of those suitors you are but one, Marquis.

VALIERE. But the worth of the giver—Mademoiselle, sans doute, you think—she will possibly consider that?

LADY W. Perhaps, yes; but only as indicated by the worth of the gift. And her standards of worth—I warn you her standards are fantastic standards of her own foolish making!

VALIERE. (*Sighing with relief.*) Ah! for a moment let my hopes be bright as my diamonds! And this decision——?

LADY W. Will be made within the hour; the chit promises it! And as it still lacks the hour before dinner, Marquis, may I show you to my brother's library, where the presents are to be laid for the judging?

VALIERE. I attend your Ladyship. Lord Cornwallis is most hospitable—most hospitable! (*Exit Lady W.*) But—she is an Irish barbarian, this girl! Down what roads must a gentleman travel—Pardieu!—when he seeks a fortune! (*Exit.*)

(*Enter, from door back, or right, the footman, who opens his mouth to make announce-*

ment, but is shoved aside by Sir Richard Wilde, who enters talking with Col. Morton.)

WILDE. You met her at London, eh?

MORTON. Yes, when she was at school there, before this damnable rebellion broke out. I've been here now two months under Cornwallis, since his Majesty appointed him Commander-in-Chief and Viceroy of Ireland; it seems two centuries that I've heard nothing but the brogue of "Blood!" in my ears, yelled by these starveling, lank-dog Irishmen. I believe they're as mad as the French jackals that bark about the guillotine at Paris. But she—ah, Dick! She——

WILDE. Has been a Venus in thy midnight, a Beatrice in thy Inferno, an angel in thy Job's torments, eh, man?—eh? Egad, Humphrey, thou art strong with the Romeo aroma. Great stuff, boy, but stuff to keep corked for the ladies. It's more precious to them than attar of roses, I can tell you!

MORTON. Look you, Dick——

WILDE. Gad's life! and it seems only yesterday we were at fisticuffs at Eton, you and I, about the grocer's daughter; and now to think we are at sword's points in an Irish castle, about the heiress of a hundred thousand.

MORTON. Damn the heiress, it's the girl! I tell you, she's perfection.

WILDE. Capital! Why, then, let's split the difference. You want the girl, I want the heiress. Well, let each have his desire. Brief and plain, Hump, my card bill has run high, and my seat in Parliament is likely to become a bench in jail, with a bailiff for a valet. So in this little contest for the hand of Mistress Fitzgerald, I'll bet two to one on you—and call it five thousand pounds. Then if you win, you'll have the girl and the lion's share of the coin; if I win, why, you'll have some of the spoil, and, for a consideration, I think we could arrange about the girl.

MORTON. Damnation, Man! Do you take me for a rake-hell like yourself? (*Crosses in anger. Wilde lightly laughs, and takes snuff. After a slight pause—*) Well, and what chance have you, anyway, Dick?

WILDE. The girl is just eighteen, mind you. Now, bluff and a baronetcy are my cards, and they trump credulity and romance. Why, what do you think this is? (*Shows a small box.*)

MORTON. Your bid, in this wooing bout?

WILDE. Ay! and what, think you, is in it? Rubies and ivory? Folly! I am playing Bassanio to my little Lady Portia. So in this casket, lo! for sixpence, I bring—forget-me-nots, 'fore Gad, forget-me-nots! (*The doors are thrown open.*)

MORTON. Hist! Here comes his lordship.

WILDE. Cornwallis?

MORTON. Cornwallis.

(Enter Cornwallis and Valiere.)

CORNWALLIS. I hear they keep it so hot in Paris, Marquis, that all the town has the rabies. By the way, is it catching, that madness?

VALIERE. Indeed, I have not been bit, my lord. All the gentlemen have left town. Ma foi, it is not safe except for bourgeoisie.

CORNWALLIS. What! does not Monsieur le Raoul de la Valiere find his name his fortress? Ah, Colonel, welcome to you! So you are in these lists?

MORTON. Entering them, my lord, in hope to be a guardian to your ward. Permit me to present you to an old friend and new rival of mine. Your lordship—Sir Richard Wilde.

CORNWALLIS. You are very welcome, sir. I had the good fortune to know your father at the misfortune in America. He helped me jump rope with Washington in New Jersey. He was well-named and daring.

WILDE. Egad, sir, his son is more so, to take a tilt in this tourney for Mistress Fitzgerald. *(Looking at Valiere.)* But I fear the odds are against us, Dick. The barber's should have been our armoury!

CORNWALLIS. Your pardon, Marquis; Sir Richard Wilde—the Marquis de la Valiere.

WILDE. Devilish glad to know you, Sir.

VALIERE. Your most obedient, monsieur. Ah, Monsieur le Colonel. (*Dick and Valière talk aside. Morton offers Cornwallis snuff.*)

MORTON. (*Stiffly.*) We have met. (*To Cornwallis.*) Does your lordship consider the rebellion at an end?

CORNWALLIS. If hoping were believing, yes. The majority of the state prisoners have already offered to acknowledge their offences; but the Irish parliament cries for Irish heads. Yet I think they blink, after all, the real mischief:—the deep-laid conspiracy to revolutionize Ireland on the principles of France.

MORTON. The very point, my lord. Even now report says that the French are preparing two secret expeditions for the invasion of this country.

CORNWALLIS. And that's a secret bugled by the winds.

VALIERE. Ah, mais, Messieurs, those be French footmen, not French gentlemen.

CORNWALLIS. True, Sir; but footmen mounted on their masters, who foot it across the seas! But, my friends, I pray you have done with politics; this is a time to settle gentler affairs, and at this moment there is more at stake than empty empires.

WILDE. (*Aside to Morton.*) Now the old boy talks.

CORNWALLIS. The question pends—what gentleman in this room shall sway the heart of a lady; and gentlemen, nothing—not even swords' points—may avail in this contest; only the decision of my dear ward's lips.

WILDE. (*To Morton.*) Gad, one would think his lordship included himself under "gentlemen."

(Here Eileen starts to run in, but catching sight of the suitors, scurries back and peeps in from the edge of scene.)

CORNWALLIS. So we must have patience until the lady arrives. It cannot be long; for this is the appointed time. And Mistress Eileen is not one to coquet with a promise.

VALIERE. Probablement she is still dressing, my lord. The ladies are more careful of their beauties; they are always different from the men.

CORNWALLIS. God save us then, Marquis; what Amazons your French ladies must be! But, gentlemen, while we wait, permit that I show you where to lay your gifts. By this way is to the gallery. After you, Sir.

WILDE. Amazingly fine lodgings, these, your lordship.

(Just as the last has passed through the door, and Cornwallis is about to follow, Eileen trips stealthily across the room, trying to call Cornwallis' attention by whispering loudly—

“My lord!—My lord!” Failing, she runs and pulls him by the sleeve, just as he is slowly passing through the doorway.)

EILEEN. My lord! My lord!

CORNWALLIS. You, Eileen!

EILEEN. What a shocking narrow escape! Ah, tell me, my lord, whether to laugh or cry. A French muff, a London walking stick, and a big British army-gun—all in pursuit of one poor maid! Dear, my lord, what shall I do?

CORNWALLIS. I will return at once, and we will talk of this and much else! But first I must usher these articles you mention where they may leave your gifts.

EILEEN. The gifts—ay, to be sure! Have they brought many? Are they vastly fine? Ah, my lord, is it permitted to me to take the gifts, and leave the gentlemen?

(Enter Right, Lady Wyndham, hurriedly.)

LADY W. Eileen! And so I've tracked you at last, Maid Runaway!

CORNWALLIS. I will return within the moment. You will wait for me?

EILEEN. In this room, my lord; and wholly on your pleasure.

(Exit Cornwallis—Ladies curtsy.)

LADY W. *(Eyeing Eileen with a look of reprobation.)* Well!

EILEEN. (*Innocently.*) Well?

LADY W. And where have you been, Mistress Dalliance?

EILEEN. Up in the tower.

LADY W. (*Throwing up her hands.*) The tower! I'll warrant me thou art a miracle of dust! Lud, child! Do you forget this is your birthday? Do you forget that this very hour you have to decide the question of all your life—the question of your husband?

EILEEN. Well, for what was I up in the tower but to catch the earliest glimpse of them?

LADY W. Of whom?

EILEEN. Of my husbands, to be sure.

LADY W. Madcap!

EILEEN. I've been watching hours for their arrival. (*Laughing merrily.*) Such wooers! For all the world, they came like the procession in the fairy tale, that dangled after the golden goose. But they shall find me of another feather. There, dear soul, do I shock thee? Indeed, then, I won't tell them I'm no goose! How many are there?

LADY W. Why, there's Monsieur de la Valiere, a gentleman of the highest manners——

EILEEN. De la Valiere! He's a fortune for a lady's wig-maker, not a lady's self! But how many other guests are there for the dinner? Is—I pray you—is Mr. O'Moigne arrived yet?

LADY W. Is who arrived?

EILEEN. I said Desmond O'Moirne.

LADY W. And what man is he?

EILEEN. The manliest in Ireland.

LADY W. Desmond O'Moirne—Preserve us! Eileen, you never mean that singer in the opera—that hothead lad—that Irish rebel, whose father was hanged—ay, hanged in this very city—for high treason. Girl! You have never been so mad as to bid such a guest to Dublin Castle?

EILEEN. Ay, have I—and I stand to it! And there will sit at my birthday dinner no nobler guest than the lad with the voice in his heart and the heart in his voice—his sole leaving of a ruined fortune—and who with his voice brought Dublin to his feet, till the English murdered—ay, *murdered* his father, I say, and sent him over sea. But I have Desmond O'Moirne's promise for my birthday night; and Ireland knows what an O'Moirne means by a promise! He——

LADY W. Promised you? O Lud! Lud!

EILEEN. We spoke of my birthday; that birthday that was to bring my birthright. And he pledged me for that birthday the gift of a song; and he will be here to sing it!

LADY W. Are you daft, child? Why, the man's an exile; he's in England.

EILEEN. But he will come.

LADY W. Travel a hundred miles and risk his neck for a song!

EILEEN. But he will come.

LADY W. Heavenly goodness! but he must not! You hear! He must not! What! *He* sing for your birthday dinner?—He,—a beggar, an Irish beggar, his estates confiscated, he—you're mad, child! You're mad!

EILEEN. But he *shall* come.

LADY W. O Heaven's patience! But he is not come! and I believe you are frightening me to exasperation only for your wicked sport! May God be thanked I am not a man with a hankering to be your husband! He has not come!—And I'll make his welcome sure, should he come! (*Exit.*)

EILEEN. But he will come! And the gift he brings shall be *my* gift, though my heart is the price that buys it!

(*Enter Cornwallis.*)

CORNWALLIS. My thanks that you waited me—and alone! I have been impatient to speak with you all day.

EILEEN. I am at your service, my lord!

CORNWALLIS. "My lord?" Why must to the heavy burden of my state be added that word from your lips, Eil  en? Will you not call me—something else? A thousand to whose ears I give commands have tongues that lisp "your lordship." Where I

would take commands, it is for me to say "my lady." Then, my little Lady Eileen, will you not be she to fill an empty title?

EILEEN. (*Evidently a bit startled at his manner.*) Ah, my—Sir, I'll wager you could tutor those younger gentlemen in pretty speech. Ah, would you could! Their compliments but woo to drowsiness!

CORNWALLIS. I would that all my white hairs were but in my wig, as theirs are. Think you, you could like me better then, Eileen?

EILEEN. Faith, not I, my lord—I mean, I mean, dear guardian! I would not have you other than you are!

CORNWALLIS. My girl, there's something in a soldier's life that never lets youth's fire go out. Powder and the flash of swords, the jostle of life and death, the fording of streams and ocean wanderings, and all that makes the rough romance of war—these things blow off the settling ashes from the living ember, and leave still a heart-leap at three-score.

EILEEN. I am sure of it. There's no calling so glorious as a soldier's, unless—unless——

CORNWALLIS. Unless?

EILEEN. Unless—maybe—a singer's!

CORNWALLIS. A singer's, child?

EILEEN. Ay, Sir, a singer's! For a singer may wake the fiery call to battle in a thousand hearts, and make a thousand soldiers!

CORNWALLIS. When was a singer ever a soldier? But, child, I did not ask this hour to talk of soldiers; Eileen, have you any memory of my wife, who died while yet you were a child?

EILEEN. Aye, indeed, dear guardian, I remember her; a lovely lady.

CORNWALLIS. A lovely lady! I met her at your age; she was much as you are; you are like her: so like her that—— (*Eileen turns away.*) Nay, child, do I weary you?

EILEEN. Believe me, no, my lord; I but remembered how swift the hour was passing.

CORNWALLIS. Before it passes, Eileen, will you not ask me what I bring you as a birthday gift?

EILEEN. Ah, Sir! I cannot fancy what there is left in your generosity for you to give me.

CORNWALLIS. Yet without the gift I bring, how incomplete were any woman's joy!

EILEEN. Riddles, my lord! What is this gift?

CORNWALLIS. What every woman desires most in this world.

EILEEN. And what is that?

CORNWALLIS. What but her own will! I give you for your birthday gift, Eileen, the promise of a soldier to grant to you this day, whatever you may ask of my power; and this day it is my good fortune to command all temporal things in Ireland.

EILEEN. (*Kisses his hand.*) Ah! Thanks, my

lord—a thousand, thousand thanks! You have brought a far more splendid gift to my birthday than any of the three who call themselves my suitors.

CORNWALLIS. Three suitors? Eileen, what if there were four?

EILEEN. Four! Has another,—is any new guest come?

CORNWALLIS. A new suitor, so I am told. And he has already presented his gift, Eileen.

EILEEN. You have seen him? Ah, who is he, dear my lord?

CORNWALLIS. One whom you know nearly, and he hopes dearly.

EILEEN. And you say he is here now?—here? Is he—is he from England?

CORNWALLIS. He is, from England.

EILEEN. Ah, where is he? My lord, where is he?

CORNWALLIS. He has fears. He is not as your other suitors, in aspect or in nature.

EILEEN. Ah! that he is not, indeed! A thousand times more noble!

CORNWALLIS. Great Heaven! You say that, child? Dear child—Eileen—then you have guessed—his name?

EILEEN. Ah, Sir, it is—it is——

CORNWALLIS. Your loving servant—Charles Cornwallis.

EILEEN. My lord!

CORNWALLIS. A time-scarred soldier, Eileen—Charles Cornwallis.

EILEEN. O my lord! My lord! (*Covers her face with her hands.*)

CORNWALLIS. She did not guess his name—'Sdeath! I'm old—I'm old—and foolisher than old! Poor child! Poor little girl! Eileen, that word's unsaid, that your tear-filled silence answered—whistle it down the wind!

EILEEN. O my lord—I never dreamed—I never dreamed—I who have ever honored and loved you as your child!

CORNWALLIS. Child of my heart forever! It was I who dreamed! Ah, child, the sweet spring fire of youth is in your eyes; and there must have been just a bit of rubbish in my old breast that caught and burned one foolish instant. But it has blazed away and it has gone out forever! There, there, lass! That very old fool, your guardian, is a soldier again!

EILEEN. Ah, my dear, dear lord, you will have from me all the heart of a daughter now and always. That is better—ah, is it not better?

CORNWALLIS. Much better, child—for you! Yes—go, child, go! In a moment they will summon us to dinner. (*Kisses her forehead.*) And that is the seal of my birthday gift—your will, to my power's limit!

EILEEN. My whole heart's gratitude to you, my lord—for all! For all! (*Exit.*)

CORNWALLIS. That I should have yearned for her—impossible! But to have hoped—worse; worse! But to have spoken—that was most utter madness of it all! Ah, when, when will December learn that the width of the year stands betwixt him and May! When will he learn that December must pass to give May room! (*Exit Cornwallis.*)

(Enter the servant, showing in O'Moigne, who is travel-stained and tired. He comes in looking about him wistfully.)

SERVANT. You said—you were expected, Sir?

DESMOND. Ay! I think I am expected!

SERVANT. I will announce you, Sir! (*Exit.*)

DESMOND. And this is the Queen's palace—at last! Eileen, is it near me that you are, sweet? Eileen! I shall see you, speak with you—sing to you? 'Tis to your own castle I come, to say in one song—what—— God! Will they let me sing—me in Dublin castle? Here, where the echoes of smothered liberty's last cry are scarcely still! Ah, Mary Virgin, for my love's sake, teach me how to keep my love's promise!

(Enter Eileen hurriedly; she starts on seeing Desmond.)

EILEEN. Desmond?

DESMOND. Eileen!

EILEEN. You—you took me unaware, Mr. O'Moirne. I had not heard that you were come, but you are welcome; believe me, you are very welcome!

(She extends her hand which he takes and kisses.)

DESMOND. You had not heard, Mistress Fitzgerald? But sure you had not forgot that I stood pledged to come?

EILEEN. I had not forgot; though indeed there has been time for forgetting since we met!

DESMOND. Just half a summer and a century of winters.

EILEEN. Have thoughts of me had such a cold reception, then?

DESMOND. No, for they were ever doing as the birds do—migrating to a sunnier clime, over the Irish sea.

EILEEN. Mr. O'Moirne, I am disappointed; I flattered myself the first place you would come to in Ireland would be this castle.

DESMOND. Why, but so it was—the first and only! You don't believe me?

EILEEN. Yes, if you'll give me word you've not been climbing for a kiss at the stone of Blarney Castle.

DESMOND. (*Smiling.*) Mistress Eileen is still herself, I see—still setting traps for runaway slaves.

EILEEN. Alack! I'd liefer my word should attract only freemen that come of their own brave will.

DESMOND. What can one do? Since you speak sceptres, my lady, I must reply with vassalage.

EILEEN. Your words are clever courtiers, Sir.

DESMOND. Then would I could dismiss them, that so my heart might stand without retinue and speak in feeling. Ah, Mistress Eileen, then you might hear how deeply I wish you joy of this day—your birthday.

EILEEN. And are you not pledged to tell me that in a song?

DESMOND. Then you still care that I should tell it so?

EILEEN. I think I never cared so much till to-night.

DESMOND. And I may tell of my joy in coming, and you will listen?

EILEEN. If it be not selfish for me to ask so much joy, as would be mine in listening.

DESMOND. (*Walking back and forth.*) I must! My heart is full—my throat aches—my thoughts they are prisoned eagles. Ah, but no! If I sang, it would be strange joy, my lady, I have to utter; for the core of it is pain. For who am I to sing at your

fine feasting, with British ears of stone to listen? What can I bring out of my country's dungeon to grace an English holiday? What flowers out of her trampled fields? What gift as a tribute to you, my lady,—I, that come beggared, wrapt in a tattered title? What indeed am I?—An Irishman, alas! An Irishman, thank God!

EILEEN. Amen to that “thank God.”

DESMOND. And you say that? O, then you will for one mad minute listen to an Irish heart that cannot keep its head. My lady, you are here; I am here; we have been apart and it was long. I came but to say God prosper you and good-bye; but now—now—now—I am come to say I love you, and—I love you—and I love you. No, no, do not speak. A power like the wind has borne me here; 'tis a power like the whirlwind that could carry me away before all's said! Eileen, far across the seas, your eyes called me—called me back through grief and shame and blood here to your feet, and here I lay the life of me. My being is no longer mine; it is Love's—and yours, Eileen!—Eileen! (*She moves slowly toward him. He gazes at her with passionate tenderness. She is about to speak, when Lady Wyndham enters.*)

LADY W. Heavenly powers! Eileen, child—what——

DESMOND. (*Rising.*) Madame,—I—Madame—

Mistress Fitzgerald has been detained at my fault. You are in good time. I—I have much wronged her leisure.

LADY W. Mistress Fitzgerald, his lordship, your guardian, desires your attendance directly.

EILEEN. (*Haughtily.*) Have the goodness to tell his lordship——

LADY W. No, child, have the goodness yourself. I take no nays to Lord Cornwallis.

DESMOND. Madame, may I be permitted to see Lord Cornwallis and explain my presence here?

LADY W. O Lud, Sir, no; I don't think it; his lordship is very busy. It is his dinner hour. Come, Eileen.

EILEEN. And this gentleman is Lord Cornwallis' dinner-guest—and mine! (*To Desmond.*) Forgive me, Sir, for the moment I must attend my guardian's summons; but it is but for the moment. You will wait my return—Desmond? You will wait?

DESMOND. I will wait. (*Exit Eileen and Lady W.*) My God! How can I stay? But I have promised—and my song is still unsung! I'll wait;—and waiting, dream a thousand different ways how she did call me Desmond.

(*Enter Morton, Wilde and Valiere.*)

VALIERE. Pardieu! The Irish singing fellow who set Paris in a flame! Why is he here?

WILDE. Why are we all here?

MORTON. A suitor?—He?—At any price we must be rid of him. The girl's a dreamer; and his voice wakes dreams.

WILDE. Leave me to deal with him. He came a suitor; he shall go as a traitor. Play up to me. Do you bite?

MORTON. A hot-head Irishman—You're right. 'Tis easy!

WILDE. Marquis, it is growing late. Is that fateful dinner never to come off?

VALIERE. I am no better informed than yourself, Monsieur le Colonel.

WILDE. Well, I for one am tired of this and need refreshment. (*To Desmond.*) Fellow; a glass of wine!

DESMOND. Sir?

MORTON. Or three glasses, rather, and quickly. What! I said quickly.

DESMOND. You will now say quickly, Sir, that you can see your mistake.

MORTON. I neither see it, nor solicit news of it from footmen. More wine and less words. You may go.

WILDE. 'Pon honor, Humphrey, have patience; give the fellow a shilling, can't you? Here, Robinson, Johnson, what's your name? (*Offers him a coin.*)

DESMOND. (*Disdainfully to Wilde.*) Sir, I

speak to the one man I see! (*With repressed anger, to Morton.*) You, Colonel Morton, have either lately grown short of sight, or have yet to learn that footmen do not carry swords; either of which misfortunes I am your servant to alleviate.

MORTON. O'Moigne! Upon my soul, and so it is! Your pardon, Mr. O'Moigne, but really you have much altered—and here was the last place I looked to meet you.

WILDE. O'Moigne—O'Moigne. Why, didn't I hear we were to have a song from one O'Moigne with the fiddling to-night? Egad, singing can't be the most profitable trade in the world!

VALIERE. The same, Monsieur, sans doute. He has the air of the stage—ah?

DESMOND. If Colonel Morton finds me altered in estate since we last met, it is surely thanks in part to Colonel Morton and those who have brought alteration to my country.

MORTON. Say rather those whose paternal care would not suffer your country to be maltreated by her children.

DESMOND. Ireland's sons have been taught to keep good guard of her. And when a meddling neighbor knocks at her door, they have but barred it fast, and died upon its sill to keep him out.

MORTON. It is perhaps well for your neck, Sir, that your mouth speaks in parables.

DESMOND. For the caution, thanks; I will eat patience.

WILDE. That's food that gives an Irishman dyspepsia.

VALIERE. Ah, Monsieur O'Moigne, it is a happiness you are to sing to us. You sing in opera, yes? But it seems you play no more the hero since—since your little rebellion here.

DESMOND. I have heard the same of you, Marquis; I believe you no longer play the hero in France, since your little rebellion there.

WILDE. Zounds! There's a clip for the French poodle.

VALIERE. But there is one difference, Monsieur. In France, the gentlemen are obliged to flee; in Ireland, it seems otherwise; for here all gentlefolk are English.

DESMOND. Sir, you have an Irish hostess.

VALIERE. (*With a taunting smile.*) O, but has Monsieur heard never of the legend of the chambermaid with a fortune, to whom lords came a-wooing?

DESMOND. (*Striking him in the face with his glove.*) You damned scoundrel! Now, by Heaven! Patience spells cowardice here! Bullies! Because I am an Irishman, you think to risk your taunts and see me swallow them with smiles. You are three to one; you think yourselves secure in the presence of the Viceroy and this roof's hospitality. The very

color on your backs is the red badge of conquering crime, the stained symbol of Irish hearts that bleed even now upon the withered shamrock. Take that truth, gentlemen, from an Irish heart, and disprove it on an Irish sword!

(All draw their swords; Desmond keeps Morton and Wilde at bay, while Valiere runs to the door. The chief bout is between Desmond and Morton, Desmond getting the upper hand, while Wilde aids Morton on the outskirts.)

MORTON. This is treason. Keep him close. Call the guard.

VALIERE. Treason! Guard—guard, ho! Treason and swords!

WILDE. Guard yourself, Humphrey; or we shall not only call “treason” but “murder.” Treason ho!

(Enter Cornwallis, followed by Eileen.)

CORNWALLIS. Gentlemen, put up your swords. Take shame! What is this, gentlemen?

MORTON. Treason, my lord. Here stands a rebel who has slandered the king.

VALIERE. Guard ho! Bring here the guard!

CORNWALLIS. *(With acerbity.)* And bid them hold all those who have drawn a sword! Gentlemen, may we have quiet? *(To Desmond.)* Sir, you

stand here as my guest. You are accused of treason. Have you any defense to offer?

DESMOND. None, my lord; I have spoken my heart—and it is the heart of an Irish rebel.

CORNWALLIS. And was that well done, beneath an English roof?

DESMOND. Your lordship, this castle was built by Irish hands, for the home of Irish gentlemen!

CORNWALLIS. Go, while you are still my guest.

(Desmond sheathes his sword, and with a deep salutation, turns to go.)

EILEEN. My lord, he is my guest also, bid for my birthday pleasure.

VALIERE. Bid to give Mademoiselle a birthday song. Pardieu! Doubtless an air from the Beggar's Opera.

CORNWALLIS. Gentlemen—I pray you merit your designation! Mr. O'Moigne, your hostess begs you to remain her guest, and for the pleasure of your promise.

DESMOND. Your lordship, it is true that I came over sea but to bring this lady the gift she honored me to ask—the gift of one poor song. But the song I brought here in my breast has already said itself to her, in words past her forgiving; and now the only song that tears my heart for singing is not a song it

would pleasure *you*, my lord and gentlemen, to hear. I take my leave.

EILEEN. Whatever the song—I claim your promise—Desmond!

MORTON. (*Aside.*) “Desmond!” The devil!

VALIERE. Apparently the gentleman is bankrupt even in promise.

DESMOND. But not yet, thank God, bankrupt in song! Gentlemen, you shall for once lend English ears to the word of Ireland!

(*He sings “The Wearing of the Green.” Ending with a burst of high feeling, Desmond hands Cornwallis his sword. Cornwallis looks at it coldly.*)

CORNWALLIS. This time, young Sir, I cannot bid you go; your liberty is forfeit. Nay, not to me your sword. That is for another custodian.

VALIERE. Ho, guard! Why does not come the guard?

EILEEN. My lord! This day you gave me promise! My will, my lord—my will to be once granted to the utmost of your power. My will is Desmond O’Moirne’s life and liberty. He has brought me the gift of a life forfeit for love and honor. Let him go, my lord—and where he goes, I go with him!

DESMOND. Eileen! My God! Eileen!

EILEEN. My lord?

CORNWALLIS. I cannot bestow as your birthday gift this gentleman's life or liberty.

MORTON. I thought there were some bounds to chivalry!

EILEEN. You can not? Say rather, my lord, you *will* not! Where is your pledged word, my lord? Yours is the power——

CORNWALLIS. Child, my power here stands powerless. I cannot grant you his life and liberty as your holiday boon, I say, for I had granted them already; the free gift of a soldier to a soldier's deed! Your boon is still your own to ask.

EILEEN. (*Kneels.*) Then—O my lord! my dear, dear lord! Let it be your blessing and your pardon!

DESMOND. My lord, I never thought to say, an Englishman has conquered me! (*Kneels, offering sword.*)

(CURTAIN.)

ROHAN THE SILENT

A ROMANTIC DRAMA
IN ONE ACT



Rohan The Silent^{*}

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

ROHAN (called the Silent, son of Sir Robert Fulford).

SIR PHILIP ROCHEMONT.

SIR ROBERT FULFORD.

GODWIN,
BEOWULF,
GOBYN,
JOHN, } His Liegemen.

GODFREY, a Priest.

ISOBEL, Sir Robert's Ward.

NURSE ELFRIDA.

The time is 1200 A. D. The scene is the courtyard of Sir Robert Fulford's castle on a morning of early spring.

NOTE ON THE PLAY.

Rohan, son of Sir Robert Fulford, has been stricken dumb in early childhood, at the sight of his mother killed at his feet in the courtyard. Sir Rob-

^{*}This play was written in collaboration with Emma Sheridan Fry.

ert Fulford has pledged his word that if at the expiration of fifteen years his son remains dumb, his nephew, Sir Philip Rochemont, shall be received at Castle Fulford as his acknowledged heir. Sir Philip has vainly sought in marriage Isobel, Sir Robert Fulford's ward. Hearing that she purposes to leave the castle "to betake her to other living" before he comes into possession as the heir-to-be, Philip comes some time before the hour agreed upon, demanding that maid and castle be yielded up to him. What follows upon his demand, the hour portrayed in the play sets forth.

SCENE.

Castle in the twelfth century. Castle walls running from R. 1st, to upper L. Castle to the R. Entrance to castle R. 2. Steps to wall L. 2. Gates in wall L. 3. A spinning wheel just below steps leading to castle. An entrance between castle and wall up R. Backing of hills and sky seen over wall. Skins thrown about court. Bench for spinning wheel, other benches, etc. At rise of curtain Gobyn is seated on bench R. Godwin is pacing stage, centre to back. Beowulf is entering from castle. John is seated on edge of table L, polishing sword. Two liegemen are seated at same table, L.

JOHN. (*Crossing to Gobyn and showing sword.*)
There's a rare polish, eh, Gobyn?

GOBYN. (*Pushing him laughingly back.*) Sit thee down and stare at thy face in it!

(*John crosses back to L.*)

GODWIN. (*Coming down.*) Nay, let him save it for fighting; mayhap Philip's face will show in it.

JOHN. Ay, fight! Fight!

GOBYN. Hear the boy! Beowulf may have other telling.

JOHN. Fight, I say! Kill Philip and his archers! Ah, but fighting is rare play! Will Philip and his archers soon be here, think you? Fight! I say!

GODWIN. Put thy strength in thine arm, boy! Warriors fight not out of brawling throats.

BEOWULF. I wot thou'lt not need thy toy, for all thy shouting, good boy John.

GODWIN. Says our lord so, Beowulf? Now, by my soul! Shall Philip stuff our throat with insult, and shall we stomach at his pleasure?

JOHN. Thou'lt ever answer for a man. Quoth Beowulf, John—I have a tongue.

GOBYN. 'Twere better for our ears that thou wert dumb like Rohan.

BEOWULF. (*Crossing to L. C.*) No insult, Godwin, for all ye breathe so hard. Our lord, Sir Robert Fulford, has made an oath; the day has come, and Philip holds him to it. That's no insult.

GODWIN. Yea, insult, say I! Why comes Philip

a sun's space before his right? Is *there* no insult? Why comes he in war's wise and to demand, and not as kinsman, to accept? Is *there* no insult? And when all's said, the oath is fifteen years grown dry.

BEOWULF. An oath's an oath.

GOBYN. A good oath, too. We cannot have a dumb dolt set up over us for lord.

GODWIN. Nor can we have a proud-mouthed Norman crying us to bend, before that we are ready. The oath was made in a mind-heat.

GOBYN. Not so! Rohan had been dumb and dolt a year. Do you mind you, Beowulf, how we counselled our Lord Robert to wait not, but to take this Philip then for a son, and for young lord, and put the daft boy Rohan by?

JOHN. This same Philip knocking at our gates?

GODWIN. Ay. I've heard; but the mother's eyes looked out of Rohan's face; and our lord would not.

GOBYN. Our lord would not then; but now the cause is Philip's.

JOHN. Shall we not fight?

BEOWULF. Sir Philip Rochemont hath six hundred archers in his wages;—e'en though his cause were not so good, we durst not come within his danger.

GODWIN. Durst not? S'body! Durst not?

GOBYN. Mark him for a fighter!

GODWIN. Ay, sword-stroke is my shrift. Not leech-death or straw-death dies my blood.

JOHN. We're a poor few at six hundred; but a big many to sit and do no fight.

GODWIN. Sooner than see these gray walls give without some war-play, to Philip, I'll swear fealty to our lord's stall-fed son, Rohan! (*All laugh.*)

BEOWULF. Rohan, the shuttle-thrower? Our castle needs *a lord*. Why should we break our hauberks barring up the gates when we must needs invite this Philip, will or nill?

GODWIN. A lord, mayhap, but why this sneak-eyed Philip?

BEOWULF. See how the name frets him! Sooth Godwin hath not forgotten how Philip wooed fair Isobel. (*All laugh.*)

GODWIN. Peace!

GOBYN. Ay there's the core o' the thing! Says Godwin,—An Philip take the castle to-day, the maid's within the castle;—let him bide till the morrow, and she may be elsewhere!

BEOWULF. 'Twere a good thought to send the girl out to him. (*Crosses to L. near Gobyn.*)

GODWIN. No, by Saint Jude, not so! (*All laugh.*)

BEOWULF. He's a brave tilt for a lady's eyes!

GODWIN. Enough! Shall the dove mate the hawk? If Philip must be lord, let him abide till he's bidden; and that's not till the morrow's morn!

GOBYN. Well said! And let us send the girl for hostage. (Mark him! Mark him!)

GODWIN. Peace! Thy tongue wags as thou wert lord.

JOHN. Where's Rohan while his castle slips his hold?

BEOWULF. Where is he always? In the woods at talk with the beasts. (*All laugh.*)

GODWIN. What answer sent our lord, when Philip's messenger came in at sun-up, demanding open gates? We are not in our lord's good counciling, though ours the fighting.

GOBYN. Nay, no fight. Thou hast forgot the maid for hostage. (Mark him, how his brow knots!)

GODWIN. Peace!

(Enter Isobel L from castle. All rise to salute her. Godwin crosses, and bends above her hand.)

ISOBEL. I am come to bid you to a consult with our lord, Sir Robert Fulford; of such matters, thus his word, as concerneth greatly to the weal of all.

GODWIN. Fair lady, thy news doth all but match thyself for fairness.

BEOWULF. (*Aside to men.*) Mark him!

ISOBEL. Nay, Godwin, heavy news; our lord looked felly on me. Methinks the business hath much weight.

BEOWULF. And so it should have. Have with you.

(The men, following Beowulf, exeunt leisurely into castle, by upper R. entrance. As

they go, they indicate to each other, laughingly, in dumb show, Godwin bending above Isobel's hand. Godwin follows them, after a salute to Isobel, of marked respect.)

ISOBEL. (*To nurse who enters R. from castle behind her.*) Nay, nurse, thou shalt not chide. (*Isobel runs up steps in wall.*) I've more heart to wink at the sunshine than at the gloom within. I'll lift me nearer by the height of a wall.

NURSE. Nay, madcap, down!

ISOBEL. That I'll not—I can see——

NURSE. Sir Philip's archers, mayhap. Down!

ISOBEL. Nay, I care not. 'Twere a goodly sight, some archers! Here we have no fighting! Yet why Sir Philip's? I would rather see the archers of some other lord than he.

NURSE. Come down, I say!

ISOBEL. Yet any archers were a pretty sight to look at. Here we do nothing. Here no one ever lifts a sword, save——

NURSE. Wilt thou down!

ISOBEL. All are old and feeble here, all save——

NURSE. Thou'lt leave me here midway the stepping stones? Thou'lt see thy old nurse fall? Oh! Oh!

ISOBEL. (*Running down, and to her.*) Nurse, dear nurse, thou shouldst bear a staff!

NURSE. To trounce thee with! (*Business.*) No one lifts a sword here save who, mammet?

ISOBEL. (*Sits herself on bench.*) Save—save— (*Aside.*) Now would my tongue were bitten off! Save—I know not.

NURSE. Save—you know not! And we with three good leaders for the fight within our walls!

ISOBEL. Three? Three? Oh, nurse! Three?

NURSE. Ay, three! Beowulf, Gobyn and Godwin,—think how Godwin lifts a sword!

ISOBEL. Ay, but nurse, I've seen a sword lifted more well—I've seen it cleave the air like a swift loop of light. I've seen it poise so still you'd think man and sword were stone—ay—and the man——

NURSE. Where hast thou seen this? Ah, thou puss! 'Tis Philip, 'tis Sir Philip Rochemont!

ISOBEL. Nay, I said it not!

NURSE. A brave, gentle knight who has no fear. Why did thee flout him?

ISOBEL. I liked him not.

NURSE. Yet he can lift a sword, eh? And all are old and feeble here, save—save who, mammet, sweet bird?

ISOBEL. Save Rohan. (*Kneels at nurse's side.*)

NURSE. Oh! eh! Hee, hee! Rohan, the churl! He who hath no tongue—my side aches! Thou'lt be sly and say Rohan, to keep thy tongue from Philip—and to thy old nurse! Pretty bird! Pretty bird!

ISOBEL. Save Rohan! And if thou wilt say Philip once again, I'll cry the name down. I'd rather twenty times say Rohan than once Philip. (*Rises.*)

NURSE. Sit thee down.

ISOBEL. Thou'lt not chide? (*Seats herself beside nurse.*)

NURSE. Ay, I'll chide! Sir Philip hath a great castle and six hundred archers. He will be master here.

ISOBEL. (*Rises to feet.*) Nurse! Speak ye treason! Sir Robert Fulford's master here.

NURSE. Ay, but Sir Robert waxeth old and in such time another master comes, Sir Philip, our lord's cousin.

ISOBEL. Rohan is Lord Fulford's son; in such time comes Rohan.

NURSE. Ay, so he should were he not a fool, so he should but by an oath.

ISOBEL. An oath? What oath?

NURSE. Sir Robert made an oath that, fifteen years gone by he would give up the ruling of the place. This is the day, and——

ISOBEL. And Rohan's master!

NURSE. Put thy teeth down against thy tongue and hold them so till that I give thee leave to speak. Rohan was a dolt. My lord's retainers urged that this same Philip should be taken by my lord for son and to be heir.

ISOBEL. My lord would not!

NURSE. Thy tongue! My lord would not *then*, but swore that if fifteen years should pass, and Rohan's curse of dumbness be not lifted, he should be set aside.

ISOBEL. And then!

NURSE. And then the place should go to next of kin; and that is Philip.

ISOBEL. When shall this be?

NURSE. To-day! Shall we all die waiting for the fool to speak? (*Rises and crosses to centre.*) A dame brat! A whimperer that clung at his mam's kirtle and never smiled when that she smiled not first; and had more mouth for kisses from her than for food; a dame brat!

ISOBEL. Oh, nurse! Loved he his mother so, and hath not spoken since the day she died?

NURSE. Hath not! When his mother's soul went out the boy's voice went out after! He's water in him; not his father's blood. No, nor his mother's neither—a rare dame! Killed, poor lady.—Ay, we had fighting in those days.—God rest her! My lady needs must see the arrows hurtle, she comes out—there! (*Pointing to tower.*) A goodly spirit! And steps her in the breach to see the fight go on—an arrow—ay!—she fell—there where Rohan stood in the court, at his feet, down dropped she stark.

ISOBEL. Oh, nurse, nurse! And Rohan hath never spoken since.

NURSE. A proper comfort to our good lord, he! Struck daft and tongueless! Then my lord took the oath, that fifteen years gone by, and no change come, Rohan should be set aside and——

ISOBEL. But, nurse! Change hath come! Rohan is great and strong, and——

NURSE. Strong like a dumb, dull ox, but can he lift a sword—knows he to fight?

ISOBEL. Ay, nurse, ay!

NURSE. Where hath he learnt? The meanest varlet in the place holds himself too high to wrestle with dolt Rohan. Hath he learnt in the woods, mayhap?

ISOBEL. In the woods, mayhap.

NURSE. I've a crick in my side with laughing. And he fights so well, 'twere well he came to-day to fight Sir Philip out.

ISOBEL. Nurse! Comes Sir Philip?

NURSE. Ay! To keep our good lord to his oath: to claim his own.

ISOBEL. Oh, where is Rohan?

NURSE. Ay, where?

ISOBEL. Nurse, mind thee that song, that song the gleeman sang so long ago, the old gleeman who loved Rohan while Rohan was a child like any other?

NURSE. A daft man!

ISOBEL. It saith,

“When scath is near and hope is flown,
The Fulford’s voice shall claim its own!”

If ’twere a prophecy!

NURSE. If ’twere! If ’twere! I’ve not patience with thee! ’Tis my prophecy that thou wed with Philip, and Philip rule us here! (*Crosses to castle steps.*)

ISOBEL. Nay, nurse! They will not give me up! Oh, shall we not fight?

NURSE. Fight! Thou and I? Thou flouted him and now he’s like to pull the walls about our ears to teach thee better manners!

ISOBEL. Why should he hurt the walls? If the oath’s true and he’s the next of kin, he can come in in peace—while for my own poor part, I can betake myself to some other living, and——

NURSE. Belike he hath made that guess, and so he comes with sword to take the place while thou art safe within!

ISOBEL. Rohan would not see me held against my will!

NURSE. Rohan! Rohan! Thou hast sun-motes in thy head! Get thee within! (*Pushes her toward the steps.*) Nay, do first thy task! (*Exit nurse. Isobel comes back to the wheel and there stands musing.*)

ISOBEL. (*Alone.*) And when the mother’s soul went forth, the boy’s voice went forth after! He

bath no need to speak. His great eyes are so soft and full of speech, and he is so strong—so strong! He hath swung me down the rocks full many times, and all day in the woods he hews at trees and plays at swords, and, ah!—my heart aches,—my heart aches! (*Sits at wheel, croons softly the song*)—

“When scath is near and hope is flown,
The Fulford’s voice shall claim his own.”

(*Enter Rohan up L. He is stoop-shouldered and sullen-looking, walks heavily and slouching. He bears in his arms a mass of flowers and trailing vines. He pauses and notes the words of the song, then comes down behind and to the L. of Isobel, and drops the flowers at her feet.*)

ISOBEL. (*Looking up.*) Rohan!

ROHAN. (*By gesture.*) Lady!

ISOBEL. For me? All for me?

ROHAN. (*By gesture.*) For you!

ISOBEL. Ah, Rohan! Rohan!

ROHAN. (*By gesture.**) Thou art pleased? There are more in the woods, I’ll bring more. I’ll bring them all. (*Starts up stage.*)

*Though the phrase “by gesture” is not hereafter given as direction, it is understood that ROHAN expresses himself by gesture alone.

ISOBEL. Nay, these are full plenteous store.

ROHAN. I can do nothing, then. (*Turns to go.*)

ISOBEL. Nay! Rohan, I—I must have help here. (*Rohan flings himself at her feet.*) Thou shalt pass the flowers and I'll weave—nay, not that one, the stem is sundered. (*Drops it, Rohan hands another with his left hand, reaching for the dropped flower with his right, puts it in his bosom.*) Rohan, thou hast been long away. Methinks thou shouldst not leave thy castle so.

ROHAN. *My castle!*

ISOBEL. Ay! *Thy castle.* Thou art come to masterhood this day.

ROHAN. Nay, I cannot speak. To-day I am set aside. I came but for this, that you—you might crave flowers—for no other cause. I'm better in the woods away; here I am dolt, fool, shuttle-thrower, here all deride me; there I may lift my head. I—I will go again. (*Starts to rise.*)

ISOBEL. But, cousin! Sir Philip comes. (*Rises.*)

ROHAN. (*Starting.*) To take what should be mine! Ah! (*Covers his face with his hands.*)

ISOBEL. And you—you weep!

ROHAN. What else—what else—what am I?

ISOBEL. Had I thy strength I'd not weep.

ROHAN. No? What wouldst do?

ISOBEL. I'd be brave, I'd be like Sir Philip, a proper right good knight who has no fear.

ROHAN. Lady, I have no fear. I may not be as others.

ISOBEL. Nay, I'd be like him. He has a—great castle, and——

ROHAN. Lady!

ISOBEL. Nay, I meant not to hurt thee. Lift up thy head, Rohan,—be not sullen, be not churlish. Nay, I believe thou canst speak. Thou canst hear me?

ROHAN. Ay, Gods! I hear!

ISOBEL. Then speak! Though 'twere but an old song! Mark it!

“When scath is near and hope is flown,

The Fulford's voice shall save his own.”

Now, try—try. (*Lays her hand on his wrist. He shivers, looks at her hand, then up at her.*) Come, now, Rohan! Cousin, take the word from my lips! (*Rohan reaches up hungrily.*) Nay, Rohan! Shame upon you! I will go! (*He turns on the ground, to follow her dress, as she passes him.*)

ISOBEL. (*At top of the steps.*) Thou'rt shamed, Rohan?

ROHAN. Ay! So thou wilt return?

ISOBEL. (*Pausing on the steps.*) I have more chiding for thee.

ROHAN. I would be chidden, lady.

ISOBEL. (*Comes down the steps slowly and seats herself slowly.*) Sir Philip would not have served me

so. Rohan, you do not pass the flowers. (*She puts her foot up on the stone steps, the better to hold the flowers; Rohan hands them somewhat blindly, for watching of the foot; noting which Isobel takes it down. Rohan plans that he may lay his hand against the place it rested.*) Your father is in council with his men; Sir Philip's herald came at sunrise, demanding—I know not what! Or else Sir Philip will—I know not what! And all the whiles we are thus endangered, *thou* art footing through the woods and care not if Sir Philip comes or no.

ROHAN. Lady!

ISOBEL. Nay, speak not! I have no patience for you! (*Rohan turns away his face down toward the stone steps.*) And now thou wilt sulk—I wist not what to do! I trow, if thou dwell on form, sooth, so will I. (*Begins to spin. Rohan touches her robe and offers her a flower.*) Nay, I have done; all's said. (*Rohan goes dejectedly.*) Nay, depart not so! Though all is said, go not so, Rohan. I—I will remember more. (*Rohan comes back.*) Nay, at my feet right meekly—see, I have thee chained! (*Puts garland over his head.*) Now swear me fealty; the oath thou wouldst swear, were thou liegeman and I queen, thus: “I, Rohan, do pledge myself your liegeman for life and for limb and for earthly worship; and faith and truth will I give unto you, to live and die before all manner of folk; so help me God!”

ROHAN. Out of my heart! "I, Rohan, do pledge myself your liegeman for life and for limb and for earthly worship; and faith and truth will I give unto you, to live and die before all manner of folk; so help me God!"

ISOBEL. Dear cousin, thou art so fierce in thy jesting I'm all but frightened.

ROHAN. I will be gentle.

ISOBEL. Alack! Thy father with his brow still dark!

(Rohan starts down L, Isobel stands by her wheel below and to left of steps. Enter Sir Robert Fulford, Beowulf, Gobyn, Godwin, John and others.)

SIR ROBT. *(Centre.)* The honor of me and of ye all I would gladly save—had I a son or were I less enfeebled and sore weary with many years, we might do otherhow.

GODWIN. *(Right.)* Let us go out and give our arms some trial.

JOHN. *(Left, front.)* Ay, ay!

SIR ROBT. Shall we go out to fall like corn in harvest?

GODWIN. We might prove the better men——

JOHN. Ay! The better men!

GOBYN. *(Right, beside John. To John.)* Peace!

SIR ROBT. And if it happen that in war's work

ye are the better men, what will it profit if ye be left upon the slaughter-place, mangled with wounds? Nay, I am weary and war-sad and our force is few. I have bid Sir Philip here for parley. For saving of my oath, this day must pass ere my sad son be set aside. In proof of faith we'll give him up the girl. The morrow he may enter here in peace and with no test of arms. This is our wisdom. Ah, 'tis long since I was Robert Fulford!

GODWIN. Still say I, let us fight!

JOHN. Ay, let us fight!

SIR ROBT. Had I a son! Had I a son!

ROHAN. (*The garland still about him comes forward, L. C.*) Good my father, a son thou hast!

SIR ROBT. Now look down, God, and laugh upon my fortunes! Here stands out my son—look down upon him and laugh!

GODWIN. Harnessed bravely for war! Out! Out!

BEOWULF. (*Left.*) Shuttle-thrower! Fit to sport with wenches!

SIR ROBT. Here stands he who should be prop and stay—here stands—Ah! I choke!

GODWIN. He is no remedy. Let us fight and abide fortune.

JOHN. Ay! And every man to show his prowess!

GOBYN. Boy! (*To John.*)

SIR ROBT. Peace! We have spoken. Where is the girl? Go one for the maid Isobel.

ISOBEL. (*Coming forward.*) I—I sat here spinning, good my lord, and——

SIR ROBT. (*Gravely and kindly.*) Thou hast heard, then; what say you, fair niece? Wilt be our hostage? In part we owe this coil to thee. Hadst thou looked with favor on Sir Philip's wooing we had not now been set to council. Wilt be our hostage? Or shall we mend thy quarrel with our good blood?

ISOBEL. (*Faintly.*) Bounden am I to be content at what is thy good pleasure, my lord.

SIR ROBT. Right maidenly.

ROHAN. (*Flinging off the garland.*) Father! Stay!

SIR ROBT. I wonder at thy insolence who by God's curse and mine hast no place here.

GODWIN. Good my lord, let us not stoop to maiden service. Let there be wage of arms, one of us against a one of Philip's. Heaven will decide the right by the issue; and by the issue we'll abide.

JOHN. Ay! And let me fight it!

GODWIN. To thy mother, boy! Let my arm make the test. If that my fellows and thy word will have it so.

GOBYN. Ay, good! A wage of arms!

BEOWULF. And Godwin's arm to make it!

JOHN. (*And others.*) Ay! Ay! A wage of arms, and Godwin's arm to make it!

GODWIN. 'Tis said.

ROHAN. Nay, my father! All—let me fight?

(*Speaking together.*) { GODWIN. Ha! He asks to fight!
BEOWULF. The shuttle-thrower fight!
JOHN. The dumb our champion!
OMNES. (*Laugh.*)

ROHAN. I am like iron. None here can cope me. Heaven will decide the right.

GODWIN. Gods! None cope thee? Thou art my pastime! Shall I be holden and stayed?

(Rushes upon Rohan. They wrestle. As they grip and strain, the men follow them about with broken cries and exclamations. Rohan throws Godwin. All shout.)

GOBYN. Where learned the fool such play?

ISOBEL. Oh, good uncle, let him have trial! Good uncle, abate thy rigor against thy son! What hath not Rohan that befits a man? He speaks not? What need hath a Fulford of words, when that he is a Fulford and wears a sword? Have the hills speech? Yet there is no strength may stir them! Speaks the great gold sun that makes the whole earth live? Hath the lightning need of words when that it strikes and kills? So, good my lord, is Rohan!

ROHAN. I, saving thee, should be lord here; by right of place mine 'it is to fight this wage, by right of strength, too, as I have shown but now before ye all, here with your best arm, Godwin.

GODWIN. (*Leaning heavily against table R.*)
Ay, he hath wrenched me. I will call him young lord.

ROHAN. For that I cannot speak ye set me by. I crave my curse be not remembered now! By the cause whereby it fell upon me, by the shaft that struck my mother's brave heart through, by the pitiful sad sight of her here at my feet, I crave you, I cry you, I demand you, remember not my curse, but let my right speak, let my heart speak, let my sword speak, let me fight!

ISOBEL. Oh, good uncle, lacks he words who can plead so?

JOHN and GODWIN. Ay, ay!

BEOWULF and GOBYN. Well said!

SIR ROBT. What say ye, men? (*Horn sounds without the wall.*) Sir Philip is at hand.

BEOWULF. We shall more nearly save our honor by a wage.

GOBYN. And Rohan here hath given good proof of strength.

GODWIN. Ay, strength hath he, and the way to put it forth.

JOHN and OTHERS. Ay, let the wage be done by Rohan!

BEOWULF. Rohan say I!

SIR ROBT. (*To Rohan.*) Put thee in war dress!
(*Exit Rohan into castle. To John and Gobyn.*)

The gates! (*Beowulf and Sir Robert confer L. C. John and Gobyn go to the gates.*)

GODWIN. (*To Beowulf while the gates are being swung.*) I tell thee, he wrenched me with my own turn o'er the shoulder,—the same as thou taught me.

BEOWULF. 'Twas I taught the lad sword-play ere he turned dolt. What's in it all, think you?

(*Beowulf and Godwin go to either side of Sir Robert up L. Gobyn and John stand either side of the gate up C. Nurse and Isobel remain to L of steps. Beowulf and Sir Robert L. C. Enter Philip through the gates C with five men and an attendant priest, Godfrey.*)

SIR PHIL. (*Coming to R. C.*) I have come for brief parley, good Lord Fulford. I have no need of consult, having many good stout men. By messenger this sun-up I have made known to you my will. The castle yielded straight with all therein. (*Isobel shrinks back.*) Or thy fair niece Isobel as hostage of thy faith, to yield at later pleasure. Failing both these, good my Lord Fulford, I have a right rare gathering of yeomen and brisk archers to show to thee, and brave catapults to knock for entrance. But that I reverence thy years and thy good service to our lord the king, I had not come. What further parley would you? Is it thy will to settle now when

I may enter here? That were fit wisdom, good my lord; and I have brought an escort for my fair hostage. Speak, my lord.

SIR ROBT. Sir Philip Rochemont, we do desire the controversy be decided by a wage of arms. Your stoutest soldier and our own. One man to one man, body to body.

SIR PHIL. Ha! My lord, for such lad's play why have I brought my yeomen many leagues?

SIR ROBT. The king would ill regard thy violence against me, good Sir Philip.

GODFREY. (*Aside to Philip.*) The old wolf hath blood still. Be thou prudent, Philip. The king's in no good humor towards thee.

SIR PHIL. (*To Godfrey.*) Peace! (*Pauses sullenly.*) Thy terms?

SIR ROBT. In fair fight, one man to one man, body to body. If that ours prove the stronger, Sir Philip shall depart with courteous safe conduct beyond our walls, and pledged to trouble us no more. If that we shall fail, we shall by need constrained submit us to Sir Philip, ourselves, our walls and all therein, swearing our fealty and pledging our service; thenceforth for always.

GODFREY. (*Aside to Philip.*) Be advised, 'twere better so. Thy arm is good. Be mindful of the king. Better 'twere done so. Thou wilt have the maid as safe——

PHILIP. (*Aside to Godfrey.*) Ay, I'll have the maid. Yet 'twere a risk. These few we have are not mate for e'en their poor forces.

GODFREY. 'Twill take but a small space to whistle in our yeomen and our archers, Philip. Be advised. (*Pause, during which Philip takes note of the force present, Isobel's position, and the gates, then aloud to Sir Robert.*)

PHILIP. Were honor drowsing now, 'twere a brave trap, good my lord, to stand single with closed gates.

SIR ROBT. (*Motions to Gobyn and John to go to gates and swing them open.*) Thou hast my surety and thou hast open gates, my lord; and thou wilt let the wage be fought without the walls.

PHILIP. Nay, here! Let me confer.

(*Sir Robert's men gather round Sir Robert.*

Philip confers with Godfrey.)

PHILIP. Mark me, I'll trust no chance for the maid. I fight the wage myself. Watch thou the shift of arms. If that I am mastered, two of our men shall make the maid secure; another two of them may hold the gates; one more is good against the other force. Come thou to my staying, thou and thy dagger! We'll hold them so, the while we whistle in our forces.

GODFREY. Thy blood shows. 'Twas always so that Norman conquered Saxon, Philip.

PHILIP. Peace! Give thou our men instructing,
and note well the fighting.

GODFREY. Ay, Philip.

PHILIP. (*To Sir Robert.*) I do admit thy parley,
good Sir Robert. Myself will meet the wage.

SIR ROBT. Good.

PHILIP. Thy Champion?

(*Enter Rohan from the castle.*)

ROHAN. (*By gesture.*) Here!

PHILIP. (*Laughing insolently.*) Sure Lord Fulford does not offer insult to a knight and kinsman! Thy terms state man to man, not man to beast. War dress hides not thy dolt son Rohan.

GODFREY. Wisely, Philip, wisely. The wage is easier thine.

SIR ROBT. The wage is not of words, Sir Philip, but of sword-stroke.

PHILIP. (*To Godfrey.*) So! (*To Sir Robert.*) Good!

(*Godfrey tightens the strapping of Sir Philip's armor. Sir Robert mounts steps L, giving inspection to Rohan's equipment as he passes.*)

GODWIN. (*To Beowulf during this business.*) I like it not. Didst note the champing of his jaw?

ISOBEL. (*Down L to nurse.*) Nurse! Sir Philip's eye turns craftily. My heart chills.

GODWIN. (*Continuing his talk with Beowulf.*)
Gates open! I like it not!

ISOBEL. Ah, Rohan! This word,—In the dark hour—Rohan, I love thee!

ROHAN. (*Not touching her.*) And God will, I may make answer, lady!

PHILIP. (*Coming forward.*) My lord.

SIR ROBT. Stand forth.

(*They take place, Rohan L. C. Philip R. C. Sir Robert on steps to castle L. Isobel and nurse down R. by the castle. Gobyn and Godwin up C. Beowulf above steps to the L. by Sir Robert. John R. near gates. Sir Philip's men down L. Godfrey with them.*)

SIR ROBT. In fair fight, body to body, man to man, Heaven to decide the right by the issue.

PHILIP. So betide me as these terms I faithfully observe me, as I am a man, a Christian and a loyal knight.

ROHAN. So help me God, all these terms I faithfully observe, as I am a man, a Christian, and (*looking at Isobel*) a loyal knight.

(*They prepare.*)

SIR ROBT. Nestroque!

(*They fight.*)

ISOBEL. Now dear Heaven save my heart!

(*They fight.*)

GODWIN. Rare! Rare! Note his sword-play!

(They fight.)

JOHN. Oh, were I there!

(They fight.)

ISOBEL. Oh, nurse, nurse!

BEOWULF. There's our lord's blood!

(They fight.)

GODWIN. God! Here's rare play.

GODFREY. *(Who moves about, watching closely.)*

He'll do it fairly!

(Philip begins to get the better hand.)

GOBYN. The fool goes under!

SIR ROBT. Mine eyes mist. Here his mother fell!

GODWIN. We're undone!

ISOBEL. O God! O Rohan! I cannot look!
(Hides her face.)

(Rohan begins to get the better hand.)

SIR ROBT.'S MEN. Ah! Ah!

GODFREY. *(Watching closely.)* Not yet! Not yet!

(They fight furiously, Rohan gaining.)

GODWIN. Bravely! Bravely!

GODFREY. He's spent! At last! If ever—now!

(Gives signal to Philip's men, to pass swiftly around the back behind Beowulf, and over the platform, behind Sir Robert; thus to Isobel. Only Rohan sees them. He tries to hold Sir Philip with one hand, that he may signal for Isobel's protection with the other.)

GOBYN. He loses!

JOHN. He's hurt!

GODFREY. He's mad!

ROHAN. *(Speaks hoarsely in his throat.)* Ah!
Ah! *(Loudly and hoarse.)* A treason! A treason!

GODWIN. God in heaven! The lady! *(Rushes down from up C. in front of steps to Isobel down R.)*

BEOWULF. The gates!

GOBYN. Dogs!

JOHN. Treason! Treason! Treason!

(Godwin grasps one of the men at Isobel about the waist. The other man Godwin holds down by back of neck. Gobyn drags shut the gates single handed, and with John, protects them. Beowulf holds the fourth man of Philip. Godfrey goes to Philip's staying, and Rohan forces Philip down. Godfrey lifting dagger is stayed and disarmed by Sir Robert.)

ROHAN. *(Hoarsely but loud.)* Right is mine!

PHILIP. I yield me. *(Philip's men drop arms.)*

ROHAN. (*Throwing up his hands.*) Mother in Heaven! I speak! I have found tongue! Ah! Ah! Ah! God hear me! God hear me!

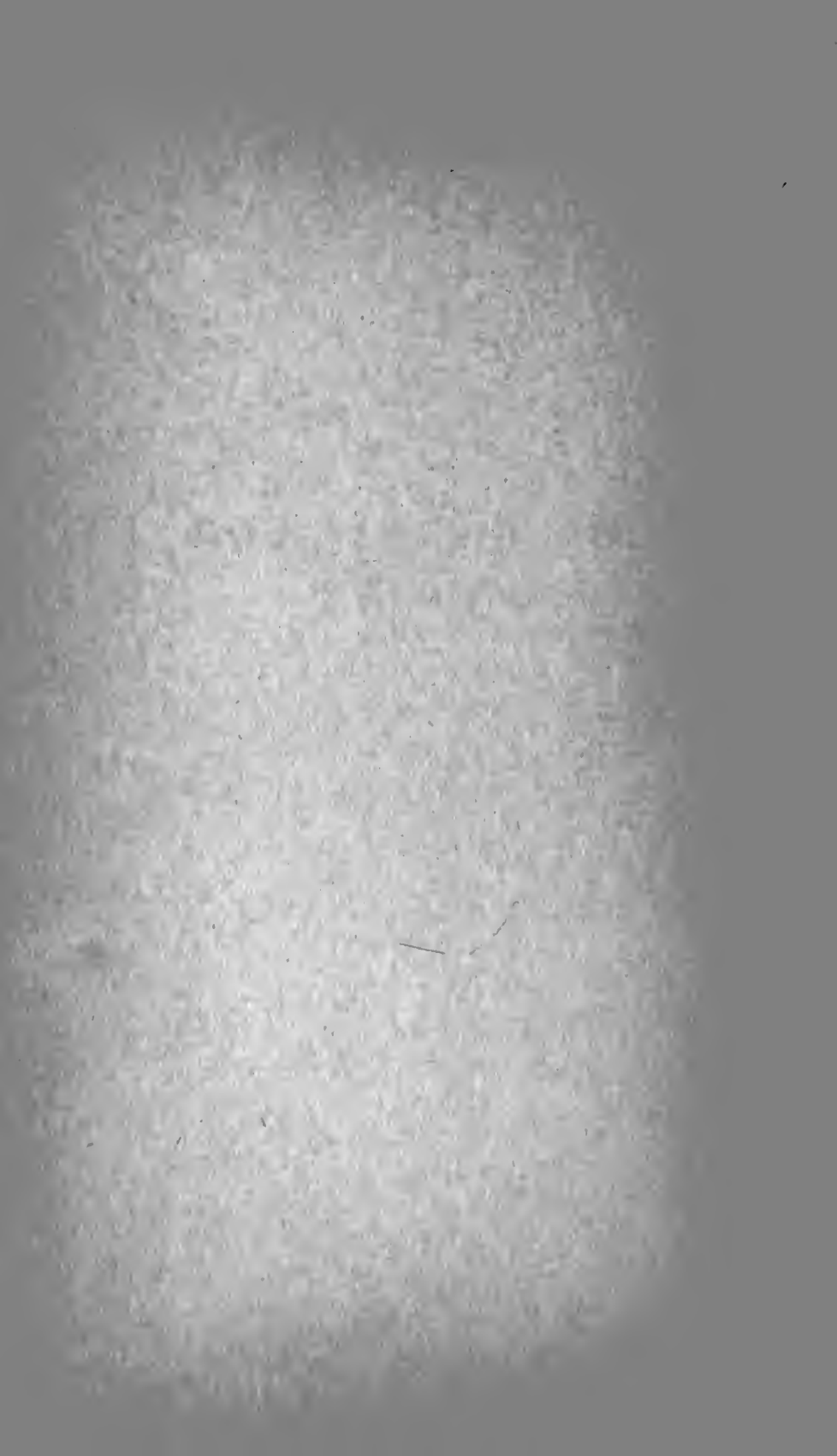
(*Speaking together.*) { GODWIN. He speaks!
JOHN. He hath found tongue!
GODFREY. A miracle!
OMNES. Hespeaks! A miracle! (*etc.*)

ROHAN. (*Turns R. toward Isobel, reaches out his arms.*) I make answer, lady! I claim my own!

ISOBEL. Thine, Rohan! (*Comes to him.*)

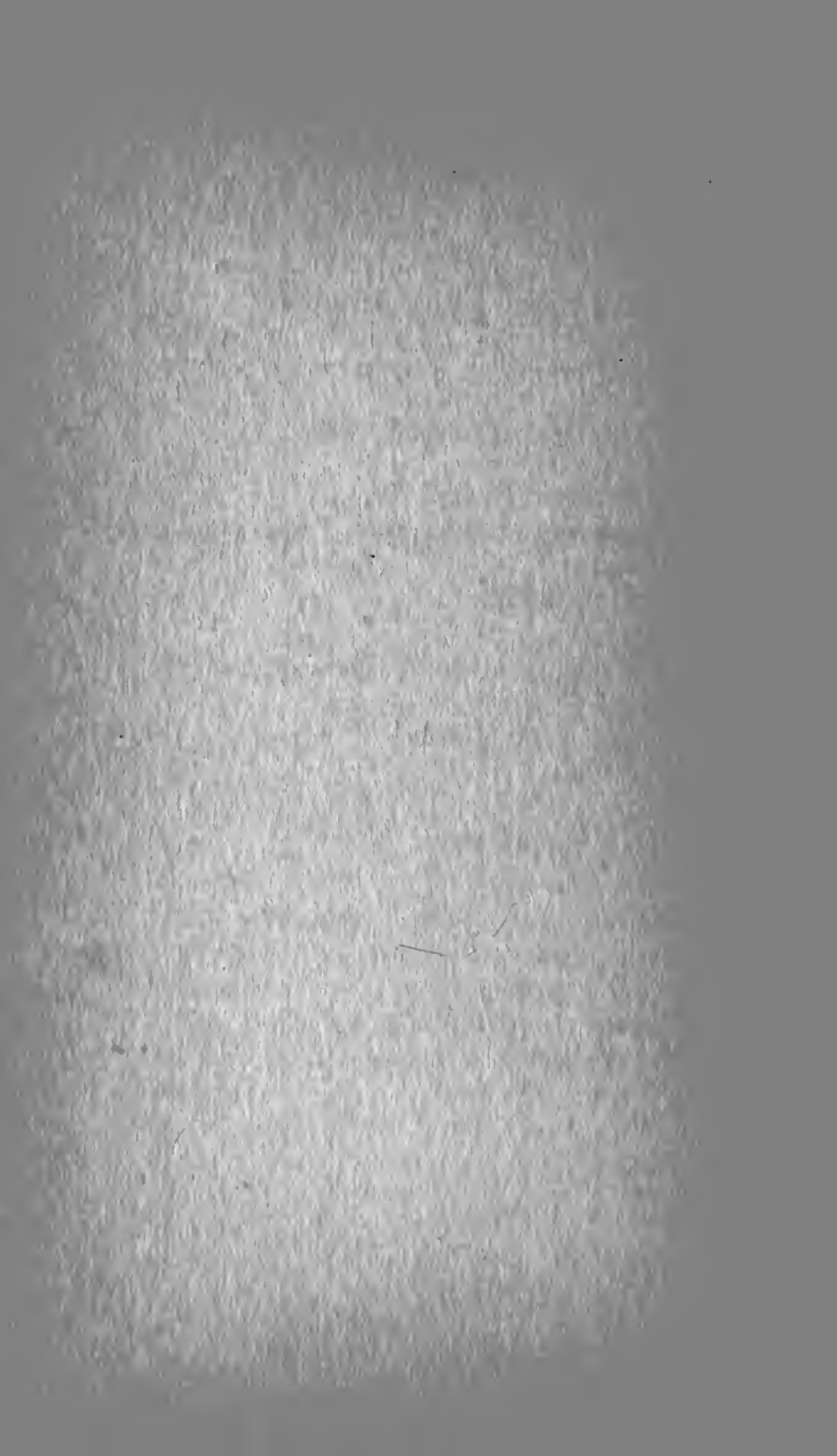
(*Sir Robert L. C. Rohan and Isobel C. Nurse and Godwin down R. Beowulf and Gobyn up C. John and others up L. Philip's men and Godfrey down L. Philip disarmed on the ground to the right, and in front of Rohan.*)

(CURTAIN.)



AT THE BARRICADE

AN EPISODE OF THE
COMMUNE OF '71



At the Barricade

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

MARQUIS DE MALREVANCHE.

LAURENT, Lieutenant of Chasseurs.

KADOC, Sergeant.

JACQUES SAGE, Corporal.

DR. RODELLEC.

YVONNE OF GUIMPERLE, called Queen of the Pé-
troleuses.

CLAIRE, Contesse de St. Lunaire.

NICOLLETTE, her maid.

THYMETTE.

MARTON. }

JEANNE.

 Pétroleuses.

Before the curtain rises the orchestra plays a series of French airs: "Sur le Pont d'Avignon;" "L'Amour fait le monde à le ronde;" "Partant pour la Syrie;" at last striking into the Marsellaise, which is repeated with rapidly increasing tempo and em-

phasis. Behind the curtain a tocsin is heard; shouts; the noises of a swiftly rising émeute; a drum-roll; cries; shots; at first scattering, then a fusillade; the curtain rises on the last moment of a fight at a barricade in the Quartier Latin, in 1871. At the left of stage, half-way back, set at an angle, is a "barricade," roughly thrown up, of paving stones, a cart, broken furniture dragged from houses, gates, and the like. A man lies dead, fallen across it face forward. Another lies dead in foreground. There are wounded men and women, some regular soldiers, some revolutionnaires, lying or sitting about the stage. At the right of stage, two-thirds back, there is a high, blank brick wall, as to a courtyard. Dr. Rodellec is examining the dead and wounded: by his gestured order, the wounded are lead and the dead carried away. At the right of the stage, at the back, a group of Pétoleuses, Thymette, Jeanne, Marton, are being bound, their arms behind them, by two soldiers, under direction of Jacques Sage; Laurent is watching them. He is dishevelled and powder-stained; there is a tear in his uniform just above the heart. The women are bloodstained, with disordered dress and hair. After a few moments of such animated pantomime as that above indicated, Doctor Rodellec crosses to Laurent, and as he speaks, they come down, centre, together. Rodellec is adjusting his cuffs, putting back instruments in case, etc.

DR. RODELLEC. Congratulations, Monsieur the Lieutenant: vive le ligue! I could not have led the fight better myself! Can a non-combatant say more!

LAURENT. There was no leadership, Doctor! The word came to us—They have raised a barricade! Level it!—I but passed the word to my men, here,—faith, it was done!

RODELLEC. And well done! 'Behind such shelters as that revolutions grow, full-statured in an hour. They are very mushrooms of hell, springing up no one knows how, and under them, the creatures spawned by——

MARTON. Remember your gallantry, Monsieur the Doctor! Some of the spawn chance to be of your audience!

RODELLEC. Be quiet, you fool! Or you'll lose more of that hot blood of yours than you can well spare! I warned you I wouldn't answer for that shoulder's bandage. It's an awkward slash, that!

THYMETTE. And why not lose hot blood as well through a shoulder-cut as through a bullet-path to the heart? It's a question of an hour,—no more! and then,—backs against the wall!—present!—fire!

JEANNE. (*With a cry of terror.*) O Marton, no! Monsieur the Lieutenant, no! Will it be like that with us? Is it true?

LAURENT. God's mercy, child that you are! why

did you not ask yourself that question before you rushed to that barricade?

JACQUES SAGE. And before you said good-morning in lead to me across it? Day of my life! Look at the mark her bullet left!

JEANNE. Monsieur the Lieutenant, what could I do? I followed Marton,—that is all! I did not know why! I did not know where!—Monsieur the Lieutenant, Marton is my comrade! She has shared her one crust with me,—she has wrapped me in her one blanket when nights were cold! Monsieur the Lieutenant, what could I do when some one had thrust a pistol in my hand, and I saw that man's bayonet at Marton's breast?

(A drum-roll is heard without.)

LAURENT. *(Crosses R. to look down street.)* De Guyon, perhaps? My colonel? God send it! It is he settles these women's fate, not I. Shoot a woman in cold blood? Faugh! It's butcher's work; not a man's!

RODELLEC. It's butchery to France not to shoot them! They're the devil's right hand, Lieutenant! Why, take that woman, Yvonne, now, the Pétroleuse leader, the most damnable,—that—which is Yvonne?

THYMETTE. More fitly ask, Monsieur, *where* is Yvonne!

RODELLEC. You're not Yvonne of Guimperle?

THYMETTE. (*Laughs.*) Am I Yvonne? Eh, Marton?

MARTON. You Yvonne? No more than a spark of fire is hell!

LAURENT. Sage! Has one of your prisoners escaped, then?

RODELLEC. Yvonne escaped! Then you've picked the cherries and spared the tree!

SAGE. There were no other prisoners, Monsieur! The woman who led the fight,—a she devil!—was gone when the fight ended.

(*The Pétroleuses laugh.*)

LAURENT. Diable! Does any man here know her?

THYMETTE. One of your men knows her, Monsieur! He was carried from there just now with her knife through his heart.

LAURENT. She's had no time for escape. Our men are everywhere. The woman is in hiding somewhere near. I'll set Kadoc on the search, and François. Guard these women well, Sage. (*Sage salutes.*) Curse such bloodhound's work, Doctor! (*Exit.*)

RODELLEC. Good faith! But that hunt will be worth the following! There'll be sport at the finish!

(*Exit, following Laurent.*)

JEANNE. Marton?

MARTON. Well, child?

JEANNE. What do you think it will be like, Marton,—the minute after?

MARTON. After—what?

JEANNE. After we have stood—against the wall?

THYMETTE. Nothing so very new, pardieu! We shall find ourselves a bit colder than the nights last winter—*voilà tout!*

MARTON. Death will be the first lover who ever touched you to find you cold!

(Nicollette enters hastily.)

NICOLLETTE. *(To Sage.)* Monsieur! Is it here the Hotel St. Lunaire lies? Ah, Monsieur, I am so terrified. All this noise—blood—Monsieur, a man fell dead at my feet in the street yonder!

THYMETTE. Honor us with your presence but a half-hour, Mademoiselle, and you shall see three women fall “dead at your feet!” *(Mocking her accent and gesture.)*

NICOLLETTE. Monsieur, who are these women? Why are they wounded—and bound? One of them is a girl—like me! Ah! *(With a cry.)* They are women like those who fought in the street yonder—they are pétroleuses! Monsieur, you will not shoot them? They are women!

SAGE. When a woman puts herself in a bullet's

way, petite,—diantre! She must not grumble at swallowing the bullet! As, for instance, when she puts herself in the way of a kiss, she must not grumble——

(He catches her by the waist. She struggles.)

NICOLLETTE. Let me go! Let me go! No man but Kadoc shall touch my lips. I promised Kadoc—— Help! Help, I say!

(Kadoc enters.)

KADOC. Who said Kadoc? Now by the entrails of the devil—— *(Catches Sage by the collar and whirls him from Nicollette.)* To-day's been a dream from the start, and here's more dreaming! You're not real? You're never, Nicollette? *)Seizes both her hands.)*

(Sage goes up stage rubbing his shoulders.)

THYMETTE. A capital entr'acte of comedy, on my soul! Life is entertaining to the fall of the curtain!

JEANNE. He has eyes like my Pierre, that soldier, and big kind hands like my Pierre! And his hands will never touch me again! Ah, my Pierre! my Pierre!

NICOLLETTE. Kadoc! It is a dream, as you say! How came you here?

KADOC. That's for me to ask you, little one! My place is here—Monsieur Laurent, my Lieutenant,

is here—man's work is here; but a woman? How came you here, little sweetheart?

NICOLLETTE. Kadoc, we are on our way to England, Monsieur the Marquis, Mademoiselle my mistress, and I. Monsieur the Marquis found there were papers, jewels, left in his Hotel St. Lunaire, yonder; he would not leave France without them. Paris was quiet at last, they told us down in Brittany—quiet and safe. We were to go to England by way of Paris. Our carriage was in the next street—figure to yourself! so near!—when on a sudden——

KADOC. The émeute! Sapristi! Yes! It swept on us in a moment, as the storm sweeps up the old St. Malo shore!

NICOLLETTE. Our horses were shot—our carriage upset—Mademoiselle whispered, “You know our town house, child; reach it if you can—the servants will open to you.”

KADOC. Servants? Open! The Hotel St. Lunaire is a smoked-out rooks' nest! But its cellar's good hiding for you, little one, till we are sure this tempest is spent. Come!

NICOLLETTE. Ah, in the dark one can be safe!

KADOC. In the dark one can steal,—peste! Why should one wait, then, for the dark? It's all a dream!

(Clasps and kisses her.)

MARTON. And that's all in it worth dreaming!

(Enter Laurent.)

LAURENT. Kadoc!

(Kadoc springs erect and to the salute. Nicollette so hangs her head that Laurent does not see her face.)

LAURENT. *(As a drum-roll is heard without.)*
Kadoc! Playing at love to that music! At this hour! And you a Breton soldier!

KADOC. Monsieur,—I——

(Claire enters.)

LAURENT. Girl, find some safer place, and that quickly! No woman who values life or honor is found in Paris streets to-day!

CLAIRE. I count that less than courteously said, Monsieur the Lieutenant!

LAURENT. Claire! Contesse! God! What does an angel in hell?

CLAIRE. Where else were an angel so needed, Monsieur, or where should she be so welcome?

LAURENT. I—I thought you safe in England, and your journey ended!

CLAIRE. My faith! I, too, thought my journey ended but now, Monsieur, when a Communist bullet played ungallant barber and robbed me of a curl! A half-inch nearer, and——

LAURENT. (*Extending his hand as though to touch her curls, then suddenly withdrawing it.*) Claire! (*He speaks in a stifled voice, and turns away to fight down his emotion.*)

THYMETTE. Will they rob us of our last distinction, these aristocrats? Diable! That was a prettier grimace than ever *I* made at Death!

CLAIRE. Nay, Monsieur, why shrink at the mention of Death's shears, when the shears themselves have touched you, too, so close? (*She indicates a tear in his uniform.*)

LAURENT. It was a bayonet thrust. Jacques turned it from my heart. But—it was not then Death's nearness brought me fear. It is now.

CLAIRE. Strange, Monsieur, when now is the first hour in months that I have known no fear.

LAURENT. You speak riddles, Contesse. It is part of this evil dream.

CLAIRE. Then I will make my riddles plain. (*To Nicollette.*) Go you, child, as the Lieutenant bade you. Kadoc will have leave to guard you. (*Laurent bows.*) Find if our hotel stands, and bring me word.

NICOLLETTE. Bien, Contesse. (*To Kadoc.*) See that you guard me well!

KADOC. No fear. (*Arm around her.*) You shall see I know how to hold a prisoner!

(*Exeunt Nicollette and Kadoc.*)

CLAIRE. Monsieur, the fear from which this hour delivers me was the fear that I might never find again that which you took with you when you left our old Breton chateau, one spring morning, a twelve month ago.

LAURENT. What I took with me, Contesse? Nay, I took with me nothing not my own.

CLAIRE. You are sure of that, Monsieur?

LAURENT. I took with me a secret, Contesse, that was mine—all mine—because I had no right to share it!

CLAIRE. And you took with you also, I think, Monsieur, a something that was not yours—the something that held your secret, — my heart, Monsieur!

LAURENT. Contesse! (*Moves passionately toward her.*)

CLAIRE. Nay, not Contesse, Laurent,—Claire! Claire, your old playmate, the child you protected, the girl your arm taught to trust man's strength, that your soul taught to trust man's goodness! Claire,—your childhood's friend,—your manhood's—

LAURENT. My manhood's idol! The love of all my life! My dream of heaven! Claire! (*He falls on one knee, kissing her hands. She raises him.*)

CLAIRE. Nay, Laurent, listen! It is not noblewoman that speaks to officer of France—it is not

maid that speaks to man—it is soul that cries to soul, across the barricade of flesh that any moment may tear away! I have lived in fear, Laurent—the fear lest I be unworthy the dignity of a noblewoman—lest I shame what my own soul has taught me is the dignity of a maid, who may not speak love, with the lips no love has kissed! But in this hour such barricades must fall. May not the bullet that clipped my curl an hour ago fly nearer in the hour to come? May not the bayonet that missed your heart but now find it, before my heart has had leave to speak? Laurent, we stand as spirit to spirit in Death's freedom. Tell me you love me!

LAURENT. I love you! I worship you! Soul and flesh, I worship you!

MARTON. Tudieu! But it seems these aristocrats can also teach us how to love!

LAURENT. My Claire! You knew I loved you!

CLAIRE. I knew; and therefore my love leaped its barricade. Your eyes have told me so, my Laurent,—oh, many a time!—in the sweet old garden, in the sweet lost time! But your lips——

LAURENT. My lips dared not, Claire. How dared they—I, a poor soldier of fortune—you, a noblewoman of France, the petted child of fortune! I, who have not even a name to offer you, my Claire—I, who owe the training of a gentleman to the charity of the man—your guardian—whose

charity to me hints my shame and his. Claire, I am nameless!

CLAIRE. Not nameless from this hour, my lover! My name—will you not make it yours? I am the last of my race. No man lives now who may call himself a St. Lunaire. There is no nobler name in Brittany—no nobler name in France! Yours is the spirit of the men who have borne it—the men behind whose sword their king was safe—in whose love was the safety of a woman! (*The Marquis enters. He watches them through his lorgnette.*) Laurent! If we outlive this hour, my name is yours as now my heart is yours,—take it, as you take—my lips!

LAURENT. My queen! My Claire! (*Kisses her passionately.*)

THYMETTE. (*A drum-roll without.*) Diantre! One can after all play at love, it seems, to such music!

JEANNE. Ah, my Pierre!

MARQUIS. (*Coming forward. He is lightly applauding.*) On my word, as pretty a love-scene as I ever assisted at in any theatre. And—*jour de ma vie!* Did I not deserve applause for entering so pat upon my cue?

MARTON. The first cue you ever took, then, from honest lips—*lâche!*

JEANNE. You know the man, Marton?

MARTON. Every girl in Brittany with eyes of any

sort has had opportunity to know the Marquis Malrevanche!

MARQUIS. Parôle d'honneur! (*Takes snuff.*) It has annoyed me—but yes, seriously annoyed me!—to feel that I have missed my cue more than once to-day! It bores one to be cast for a part one is unfamiliar with. I have never played a refugee. I do not find the rôle congenial!

(From this point there arise, gradually, the sounds of a rising émeute; drum-roll, shots, shouts, the tocsin, and the Marsellaise; but faint at first, and very distant.)

LAURENT Monsieur the Marquis——

MARQUIS. One moment, my children! One moment's patience! I was about to say that it is most gratifying to chance on a cue one cannot miss,—and my obvious line is—Bless you, my children!

CLAIRE. I thank you, Monsieur, for the consent that to-day makes it unnecessary for me to ask!

MARQUIS. Well and neatly said, my ward! We celebrate your birthday but ungallantly,—yet it seems to bring you a desired gift after all! Monsieur the Lieutenant—may I add, Monsieur my son?—let us make it complete, in bringing you also a gift,—my name!

CLAIRE. Monsieur the Marquis, to-day has twice

brought my husband an honorable name,—one name won by brave fighting,—one name offered by humble love!

LAURENT. Unworthy as I am, she has answered you, Monsieur the Marquis. I desire no other name than these.

MARQUIS. Yet consider, Monsieur my son. But for a slight legal formality, regrettably omitted, the name had been yours by right of birth. Yet who could regret an amiable indiscretion that has had such a consequence? It arranges itself so conveniently! The lady for whom the formality was observed, neglected, before her lamented exit, to furnish an heir to the Malrevanches;—another lady had already generously anticipated that deficiency—it is perfect! The unclaimed name—the nameless son! Voilà!

THYMETTE. Such as he is make revolutions!

CLAIRE. I say again, to-day brings Laurent what you cannot offer him,—an *honorable* name, Monsieur!

JEANNE. Such as she is make—France!

LAURENT. Monsieur the Marquis, you have given me the right to ask you the question on which all depends—for me. Who is the woman who must bear your name before I bear it? Monsieur the Marquis, who is my mother?

MARQUIS. Dieu des dieux! There you bring me

to an embarrassment. Who was your mother? Frankly, Monsieur my son, I do not remember!

(There is a cry without. Nicollette enters, struggling in the grasp of François. She is weeping with fear. Yvonne follows; she twists François's hands from Nicollette, who throws herself sobbing at Claire's knees.)

NICOLLETTE. Mademoiselle! Mademoiselle! They broke into my hiding-place, these soldiers! They said I was a Pétroleuse, Mademoiselle! That I was that terrible woman, the Pétroleuse they were seeking, Mademoiselle! That I was to be brought here, and shot against the wall!—that I was——

YVONNE. *(Advancing.)* That she was Yvonne of Guimperle—in a word, that she was I! *(Claire raises Nicollette and tries to calm her.)*

JEANNE AND THYMETTE. Yvonne!

LAURENT. Yvonne of Guimperle!

YVONNE. *(With a mock courtesy.)* At your service, Messieurs my executioners!

MARQUIS. Yvonne! Foi de mon honneur! And she is handsome yet!

(Kadoc, entering, brings a folded paper to Laurent, who opening, reads. Yvonne laughs with the women as the soldiers bind her arms.)

KADOC. The Colonel's orders, Monsieur the

Lieutenant. And immediate! (*He indicates by gesture the Pétroleuses.*)

LAURENT. Make them ready, then. But do—nothing—until Mademoiselle the Contesse—— (*He indicates Claire's departure by gesture.*)

(*The soldiers tighten the binding of the women's arms.*)

MARTON. What fool's work brought you here, Yvonne?

YVONNE. A fool's will, if you like, comrades! I had safe hiding in the cellar of the Hotel St. Lunaire yonder,—your pardon for trespass, Mademoiselle the Contesse! This small one (*Indicates Nicollette.*) was brought to the same hiding by her big lover. Did she fear me when she found me! Diantre, no! No more than had she been kitten and I cat, instead of tiger! My word! She fed me bread and wine—it was a fête! Then burst in these unmannerly clowns—they seized her, crying we have her—the hell cat—the queen of the Pétroleuses!—*She*—the queen of the Pétroleuses! But they have perceptions, these gentlemen!

(*The women laugh.*)

THYMETTE. She might have inconvenienced you, all the same, by filling your place—there! (*Indicates the wall, against which they are placing Marton, sullenly resisting.*)

YVONNE. Diable! No! That is precisely where she could not take my place! Is all my vanity dead? Should they say, "So Yvonne of Guimperle dies" of the death that small one would die? The death of a little scared kitten? No! I've lived my own life, I'll die my own death; mille tonnerres! 'Tis but to leap one more barricade, with a Perhaps beyond it!

LAURENT. Let Kadoc take you and Nicollette away, my Claire! What must come presently is not sight for woman's eyes.

CLAIRE. Nor work for men's hands, Laurent! They are women!

(Laurent makes a gesture of despairing appeal, indicating his helplessness to disobey orders.)

MARQUIS. *(Crosses, surveying the Pétroleuses through his lorgnette.)* Ma foi! It is of course the fortune of war, but all the same it is a pity to waste such good material!

YVONNE. *(Squarely facing him.)* It is a pity you did not say that to yourself twenty-three years ago, Monsieur the Marquis de Malrevanche!

MARQUIS. You do me the honor, then, to remember me?

YVONNE. My excellent memory saved your life a half hour ago, Monsieur. When my people so rudely

interrupted your journey yonder, I struck up the pistol that was billeting you for a longer journey.

MARQUIS. And to be remembered kindly! How gratifying!

YVONNE. If you put it so. Frankly, I reasoned thus, Monsieur. The chances are I travel the dark road within an hour or two. God save me from meeting him upon it! So I ensured your remaining behind!

MARQUIS. Truly woman varies! This was hardly your attitude two and twenty years ago, my dear!

YVONNE. Are you sure you knew my attitude, Monsieur? My action—yes,—my motive—no! Vanity has ever been your weakness, Monsieur. I have sometimes thought you may have fancied I loved you!

MARQUIS. The fancy is pardonable, perhaps, when one considers that yonder stands—our son!

LAURENT. My mother! Claire! God! God!

CLAIRE. Laurent! Her courage is in your eyes!

YVONNE. As you say—our son. Your servant, Monsieur, our son! We were speaking of love, I think? Monsieur, all my life it has been my whim to leap barricades. Two and twenty years ago I dreamed my youth and beauty might lend me wings to leap the barricade of rank. I thought to be a Marquise, Monsieur! Hence,—our son! You were

too clever for me; for the first and last time a barricade baffled me. But love—Monsieur, I am a woman of taste!

THYMETTE. She is magnificent!

(Laurent advances to Yvonne, and begins to unbind her arms, straining at the twists of the ropes. He is tensely white.)

MARQUIS. What are you doing?

CLAIRE. His duty, Monsieur—how should you comprehend it?

YVONNE. Why do you release me?

LAURENT. You are my mother.

YVONNE. You know what I am?

LAURENT. You are my mother.

YVONNE. Do you know what you do, boy, I say? You free the best hated woman in all Paris,—the woman on whose head your army sets a price!

LAURENT. You are my mother.

YVONNE. In loosing me you put the ropes on your own wrists. It is treason.

LAURENT. You are my mother.

YVONNE. Reflect, if you can. Do you count on this man's favor when you stand cashiered—disgraced—your sword snapped before your face? You do not know this man!

LAURENT. You are my mother.

YVONNE. Do you think this girl will reach her

hand to you across prison bars? You do not know our nobility!

LAURENT. You are my mother.

(He breaks the last knot. She stands chafing her wrists, red from the ropes, and surveys him, keenly and curiously.)

YVONNE. And for what I am you will give up honor—name—love—life?

LAURENT. For my mother.

YVONNE. Tudieu! *(With a short laugh.)* But I doubt after all if you are the son of the Marquis! Will you give me one thing more, having given me so much? Monsieur my son,—may I kiss you?

LAURENT. If you will—my mother!

(Yvonne throws her left arm about Laurent's neck, and kisses him full and long on the lips. With her right hand she swiftly and softly takes his pistol from his belt. Releasing him, she faces him, holding the pistol behind her.)

YVONNE. Turn for turn—I have given it all my life! Why should I change policy because the last turn is a good one? Monsieur my son, you freed me,—I free you! *(She shoots herself—staggering backward.)* I have leaped my last—barricade! *(Falls backward across the barricade.)*

LAURENT. *(Rushing to her.)* Woman!

CLAIRE. Nay, Laurent!—Mother!

(There is a crash of drums without; fusillades and cries. Kadoc rushes in.)

KADOC. Monsieur the Lieutenant, the émeute rises again! They will try to make this barricade!

LAURENT. Claire! In God's name, let me make you safe!

CLAIRE. I am safe beside you, my Laurent! There is one more shot in your pistol. *(She raises the pistol that has fallen from Yvonne's hand.)*

(There comes a mad rush of revolutionnaires and soldiers. The Pétroleuses are released. Jeanne cries "Pierre! my Pierre!" as a stalwart soldier catches her in his arms. He bears her off, fainting. Thymette rushes forward, a knife in her hand. She kneels to Claire, catching and kissing the hem of her gown.)

THYMETTE. This to you, Mademoiselle! *(She buries her knife in the Marquis's side.)* And this to you, Monsieur! Follow me, my women!

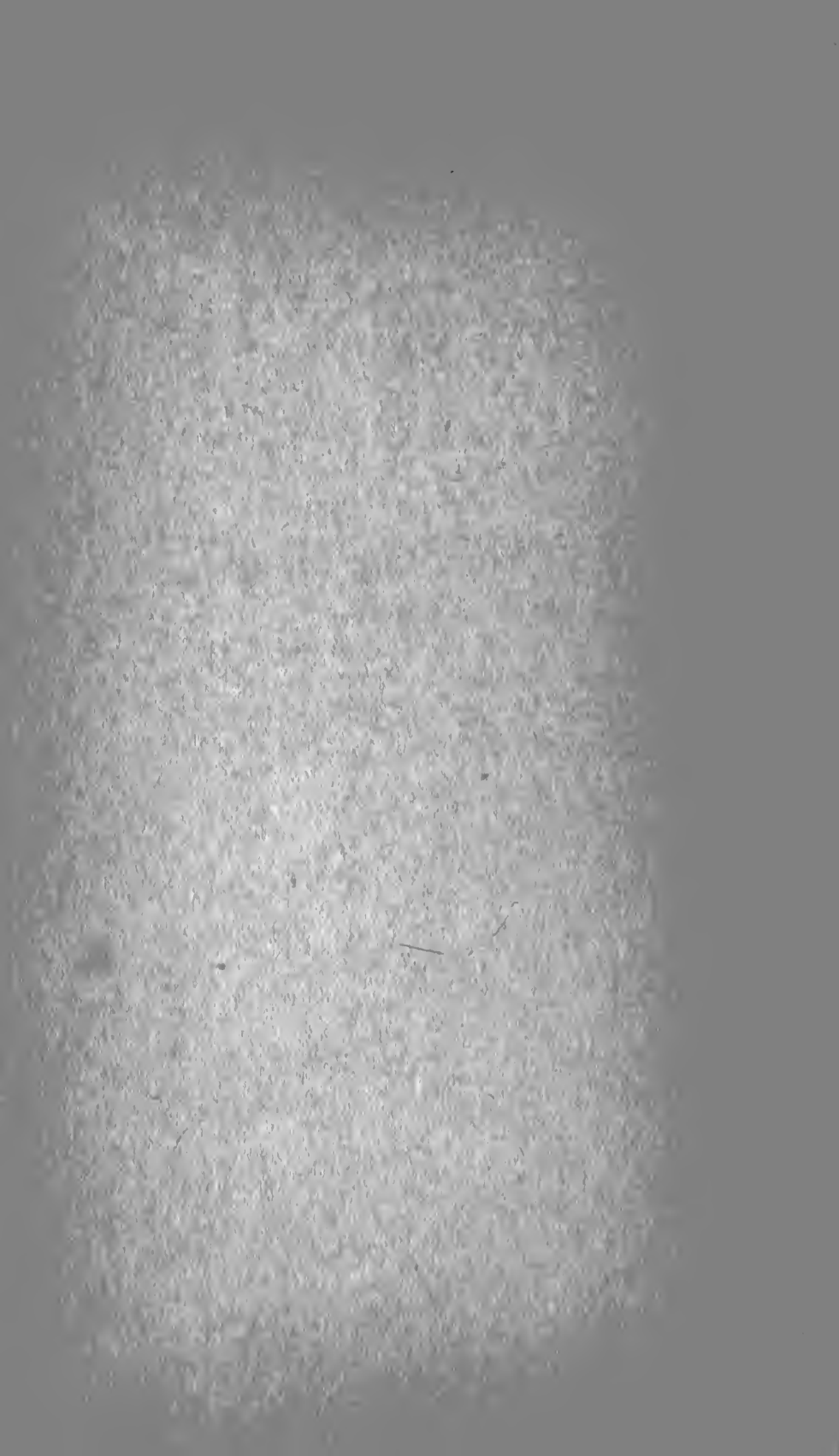
(She rushes out, the fight swirling after her. The Marquis stands quite erect, for a moment, the hand that holds the lace handkerchief pressed hard against his wounded side. He removes it, and glances at it, his face clouded

by a slight spasm, as he sees it is stained with his life-blood. He opens his hand and the handkerchief flutters down to the floor.)

MARQUIS. Apparently one does not—miss—the cue for—one's—exit. (*He staggers and falls; with his face upturned.*)

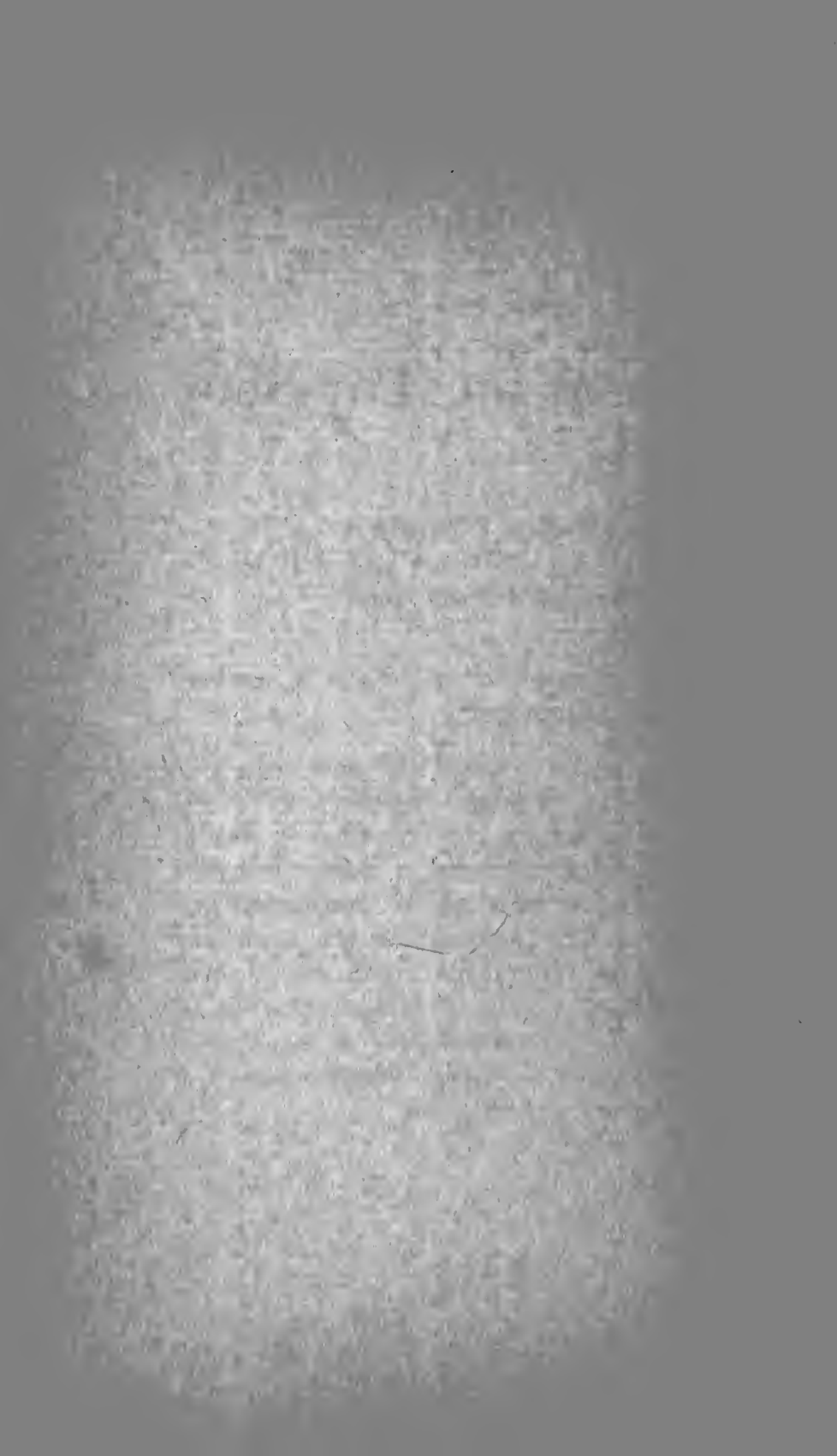
(Laurent rushes back, the flag in his hand. He plants the flag on the barricade. He hastens to Claire, catching her hand and kissing it, in an ecstasy of passionate relief at finding her safe. She points to the dead Marquis. He comes down, his sword in hand, and stands looking at his dead father, in a kind of daze. Claire comes softly down, and slips her hand into his. He lifts his hat from his head, as if unconsciously, looking down still at the dead man.)

(CURTAIN.)



Galatea of the Toy-Shop

A FANTASY IN ONE ACT



Galatea of the Toy-Shop

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

OSCAR SCHWARZ, a German toy-maker.

GALATEA, a doll.

The place is Germany. The time is the present.
The scene is Oscar's work-room.

The scene is the interior of the work-room of a German toy-shop. Across the back, there runs a low, broad latticed window. A large work-bench, back, C. is littered with all sorts of tools. Toys of all sorts are scattered about the room, ad lib. The furnishing, rough and simple, is as foreign in suggestion as possible. At the R. C. is a wooden stand, with a railed top, from which hang calico curtains: concealing the figure within. On the wall, R. is a telephone, which rings, as the curtain is rising. Oscar Schwarz is

seated on a stool, R. C., working busily at a steel spring. He is in the blouse of a workman. He is humming or whistling the last few bars of Die Lorelei which is the curtain music.

OSCAR. Du Lieber! But I do not think I have the curve yet! And until I get the curve, this spring that is to make the voice of my most beautiful of dolls,—my queen of dolls—(*With an adoring gesture toward the closed curtains.*) her voice will be like the squawk of a crow who has eaten of green apples! It is her only fault—that voice! I have the perfectest doll in the world, when this spring gets the true curve, and my doll says “Papa!” “Mamma!” like a cherub, and not like a crow after green apples! (*The telephone rings again.*) Tausend teufels! I was just getting the curve, and now I must lose it to scream with some fool, at this accursed box in the wall! (*He angrily lays down his work, and goes to the telephone.*) Hello, thou, Fritz? No, I cannot come to the beer-drinking to-night! My doll is not finished: and the prize competition for the doll-makers of all Germany, opens but two days off! For my doll she is all but her voice the perfectest doll in Germany: and her voice—ah! my Fritz! Her voice—it is to hear it, as if the devil’s dentist sat astride thy front teeth with a saw! It is her voice-spring that I curve at this moment. Wherefore I

can have neither beer nor thee! Yes, if my doll take not the prize, I am ruined. Yes, my Fritz! My father is a pig and the son of pigs—What is it thou sayest? The *father* of pigs? Get thee where beer cannot quench thirst! Yes, my father will cut me from his house, if I bring not home a wife instantly! A wife! I! Better the lost prize, and the river! Good luck, my Fritz! Drink many steins to the voice of my doll. (*He hangs up the telephone and returns to his work.*) A wife! Who frowns on the beer, and demands that the friends of the husband wear clean collars! A wife! Pig of a father! (*He crosses to the stand, and lifts the curtain at the back, so that the audience cannot see within.*) Now let us once more try the spring! In it goes! Ah, sure the curve is exact. Now let us touch it, and hear the sweet little voice say “Mamma!” (*He makes a motion as touching a spring, and there comes from within the curtain a raucous and ear-splitting yell of “Mar-mar!!!”—He jumps wildly back.*) Donner und Blitzen! What have I done! It is thrice worse than before! It is the nightmare dream after pork! (*From within, the voice repeats “Mar-mar!” in a gradual diminuendo, but always most discordantly, until it dies away in a hoarse and jerky whisper.*) That spring is in on the wrong side up! It is bewitched, that spring! What shall I do? O, me miserable—and the competition opens but two days

off! (*The telephone rings again.*) Donnerwetter! Once more! (*Rushes madly to the telephone.*) Hello! I will talk with nobody! Yes, I am Oscar Schwarz! But I am not here! I am away! I am dead! Since yesterday I am dead: and the doctors say I am to speak to no one, for the fear of contagion! Eh? It is you, my father? Well, then, I am not dead: but I soon will be, if I am not left alone to finish the accursed voice-spring of my doll! A wife? My father, I have sought no wife! I will have no wife! Furthermore—yes, to-morrow is my birthday—and my death-day it shall also be, if you leave me not alone with the spring for the voice of my doll! If I find me a wife before to-morrow, I shall have the half of my heirship—and if I find one not, you cut me off forever? Cut me off, then, father of a pig!—I mean, *son* of a pig! Cut me off!! Cut me—— (*He jumps back from the telephone, as from an explosion.*) But cut me not off with a bang that destroys the last ear Heaven gave me! (*He returns the receiver to the hook, rubbing his ear dolefully.*) It is ended! Unless I can shape the spring to give my doll the cherub's voice to match her cherub's face, I am a done man! (*He approaches the stand, and stands with his hand on the front curtain.*) Let me once look on thee—perfectest result of mine art! Let me gaze on thy face with its red and white—on thy little hands, that I have made to extend themselves as if they greeted

the world—on thy tiny feet, that I have made to carry thee, as if thou thyself did guide them! (*As he speaks, he slowly draws the curtains. Galatea is discovered on the pedestal. Her coloring is that of a dainty doll. She is in a white lace-trimmed petticoat, rather short, showing pretty, high-heeled slippers; she has a low-necked bodice, as it might be a corset-cover, or the waist of a chemise; the effect of being all dressed, except the outer dress.*) Ah, vision that thou art! How shall I dress thee, when the spring is rightly in its place and thou art complete? Shall it be the dress of a fine Paris dame, that I have won? (*As he turns his face toward his work-table, her face turns too, unseen by him, in the same direction; but mechanically and slowly, as if a spring worked stiffly.*) Or shall it be the little gown of a dear German house-mistress? In either thou wilt be adorable, thou perfectest of dolls! (*Before he again looks at her, she has turned her head to its original position.*) In any dress how lovesome thou wilt seem! How the so happy child to whom thou wilt belong when Christmas comes, will kiss those perfect lips! I all but wish I were that child! Nay—no one sees! I will be as that child, and taste if thy lips be as sweet as they seem! (*He kisses her. Her eyes move from side to side. She smiles, and makes a few jerky motions, as if coming gradually alive. He starts back, in terror and amaze.*)

GALATEA. (*Speaking in the same raucous yell, as that in which she spoke, behind the curtain.*) Do that, yet once again!

OSCAR. Mine Heaven! She speaks! Yet speaking it is not: for the spring of her stomach is upside down!

GALATEA. Do it yet again—again!

OSCAR. (*Stammering.*) Do—what?

GALATEA. How know I what you call it? This! (*Purses her lips as for a kiss.*) It brought me awake—that: but I would be *awaker!*—again!

OSCAR. Speak no more, for the pity of me! I will kiss thee ten times,—it is no great penance! but in mercy cease that crow-scream!

(*He kisses her again; she smiles, and begins to jerkily descend from her pedestal.*)

GALATEA. It is not easily that I come!

(*She pauses with her foot in mid-air, with a kick-like motion, as if the spring for a moment refused to work; then, gaining control of herself, jerkily comes down from out of the stand.*)

GALATEA. Something stiffes me! Can't you un-stiff me? (*Sharply—as he stands in a daze.*) You made me,—didn't you?

OSCAR. I suppose so!

GALATEA. Then un-stiff me! My arms—they

will not work at all! (*She abruptly stretches out one arm, hitting him so that he reels.*) Ah; yes! The arms work more better than I thought—better than the legs! (*She makes as if to kick; he precipitately backs away.*)

OSCAR. You need not be anxious—you're less stiff than most young women I know!

GALATEA. Am I a young woman?

OSCAR. Well, yes—partly!

GALATEA. What do you mean by "partly"?

(Her voice throughout this scene is very queer; alternating between a sudden raucous yell, and a hoarse whisper; with as many sudden and droll variations as possible.)

OSCAR. Well, you are a young woman,—and you aren't,—you know!

GALATEA. How aren't I? I will be a young woman! I came awake on purpose to be a young woman! (*She bursts into the queerest possible laugh.*) O my soul! My soul! My inside is made wrong! I could cry loudly because I am only partly a young woman!—and I can only do—so—instead! (*With a repetition of the queer laugh.*) Tell me why—why—I am only partly a young woman!

OSCAR. Well—for one thing—your voice isn't—isn't——

GALATEA. Don't all young women speak like me?

(Rising to a sudden, calliope-like shriek, on the last word.)

OSCAR. The Lord forbid!

GALATEA. You made me—well, then, why didn't you make me right? Can't you oil me, or something? Maybe I'm dry!

OSCAR. Donnerwetter! Maybe that's it! *(He runs to his table, and fetches down a tankard of beer.)* Here! Drink quickly!

GALATEA. What is that?

OSCAR. I made her,—and she asks—What is *that*! It is beer!

GALATEA. What is—beer?

OSCAR. We do not describe beer:—we drink it!

GALATEA. O! It is to drink? *(She sips it daintily; takes down the can, for a moment, with an expression of amazed and ecstatic delight; and then hastily raises the can to her lips again, and drains its last drop.)* More!—Again some beer!—Much,—much—more beer!

(Her voice is queer on the first word or two; but immediately softens, and she ends in a sweet and girlish tone.)

OSCAR. A miracle! The beer has turned the spring right side up! Her voice is mellow as honey from the comb!

GALATEA. More beer! Much—much more beer!

OSCAR. Not now; you are new to it—and your voice—well, there is such a thing as beer making us too mellow!

GALATEA. I foresee I shall be dry and scream again. And am I now really a young woman?

OSCAR. Well—as to your dress——

GALATEA. Do not young women wear dresses?

(She makes as if to loose the band of her petticoat. He hastily stops her.)

OSCAR. Yes—yes—indeed, I may say young women wear—rather more dress!

GALATEA. Very well, then—you made me. Where *are* the rather more dress? Produce the rather more dress! Surely you *have* the rather more dress—if you made me to be a young woman!

OSCAR. Don't let it hurt your feelings—but I am afraid I made you to be a doll!

GALATEA. Is there such a great difference between a young woman and a doll?

OSCAR. Truly, that depends. I have known a good many young women that were dolls; but I never before have known a doll that was a young woman.

GALATEA. I prefer to be a young woman. Dolls are not kissed—at least, they are not *nicely* kissed, as I was, just now. Dolls cannot drink beer! Ah! Beer! *(With an affectionate gesture toward the*

tankard.) Decidedly, I will be a young woman. Produce the rather more dress!

OSCAR. I—I had not yet decided what you were to wear.

GALATEA. Now I am awake, I will myself decide that. A young woman need not be long awake to decide what to wear.

OSCAR. I had thought to dress you as a French demoiselle—perhaps as a little German hausfrau. See! Here is the one dress and here is the other.

(He goes to his table, and takes from a box, the two costumes. Both must be correct; the French gown dainty and chic; the German one pretty and simple; but both must be made on the princess model, in a single piece, so that they can be easily slipped on.)

GALATEA. *(Catching at the French gown.)* Ah, that is of France. I know, for the French doll that stood beside me was so dressed! I wonder, did she come awake, that French doll? Du Lieber! *(Turning to him in an explosion of suspicion.)* You did not kiss that French doll?

OSCAR. I sold her. I never kissed a doll but thee.

GALATEA. Nor a young woman?

OSCAR. *(Hastily.)* You are dry, perhaps? Another mug of beer?

(He hands her the beer, which she drinks ecstatically, as before.)

GALATEA. It is good. But you will not kiss another doll—nor another young woman! Now put on my gown. (*Holds out her arms stiffly.*)

OSCAR. (*Fastens the gown rapidly but awkwardly.*) I am not wise in dressing dolls.

GALATEA. Nor young women?

OSCAR. May Heaven forbid!

GALATEA. Now I am finished—and I am very good to look at!

OSCAR. How are you sure of that? There is no mirror.

GALATEA. There are two mirrors that tell me so—this mirror, and that mirror! (*She touches his eyes, softly, one after the other.*) What other mirror does a young woman need, than the eyes of a young man?

OSCAR. Lieber Himmel! And but an hour ago, thou wast a doll!

GALATEA. I have been kissed since then. Moreover, I am French now; and French young women come early very wide awake.

OSCAR. Why that?

GALATEA. Ah, in Paris the world is wide awake—night and day it wakes! Watch me, and see what like is Paris! (*In the speech that follows, she impersonates as fully as possible, every scene of which she is speaking.*) The Paris of the morning—the sun is on the white pavements—they are new-sprinkled, and so clean—so clean! The grass is fresh in the parks—

the bonnes, the pretty nurse-maids, in their pert caps and big aprons—they wheel the perambulators with the rosy babies. But they are not looking at the babies—they are looking at the gend'armes, who march by, so natty and so proud, twisting the little moustache—as thus. And the bonnes are looking—thus—from under the lashes. “Good morning, Mademoiselle!” “A fine day, Monsieur!” “Are all mademoiselle’s promenades taken in company with this encumbering machine?” (*Indicating the imaginary perambulator.*) “No, truly, Monsieur, this most afflicting infant is sometimes asleep in her crèche!” “And then, Mademoiselle, there may be opportunity.” “Truly, as you say, Monsieur, there *may* be opportunity.” And so they pass,—he with his little moustache, she with her lashes. Noon, then—the sun so hot and strong on the big, splendid boulevard. Hark! From the Arc de Triomphe, hear the crash of the trumpets—the drums—the drums—r-r-r-rub-a-dub-dub! ta-ra-ra-ta-ra! See the flash of the bayonets! How straight they march! One—two—one—two!—tramp! tramp! For death or glory! Aux armes, citoyens! (*Singing a bar of the Marseillaise.*) Tramp! tramp! Tra-ra-ra! Rub-a-dub-dub! (*She imitates the effect of the music and the tramping growing fainter and dying away.*) And pouf! The soldiers are also gone. And bye and bye it is night. The streets are ablaze! How the glow streams from

the doors of the Grand Opera! Within, the stage is set for great Wagner night—it is the moment when Brunhilda defies Criemhilda,—how they scream and storm! (*She imitates, ad lib., the scene between the women, ending in Criemhilda's death.*) After the theatre—well, if one has a fancy to see a pretty dance,—a dance where the slipper leaves nothing to be guessed of itself. (*She imitates a high kick.*) Pouf! It is dawn before we know—dawn—br-r-r— (*With a simulated shiver.*) How cold the dawn-wind is! How cold the light, after the glare of the café lights! How terrible is the dawn light! How much the dawn light knows! What are the white women coming down the street in the grey light? They wear white veils that stir in the dawn-wind as the lily's petals stir. And theirs are lily faces—lilies in the bud! Uncover as they go by! They go to their first communion—with the souls of lilies, and the dawn-light on their hair! Do you see who is watching them—standing far back in the shadows? It is the dancing woman of the café—the woman with the rouge and the bold eyes and the foot that danced too high—see her eyes, as she watches—how haggard they are! Do you hear what she is muttering to herself? “I was once like them! I was once like them! And now—O! There is but one cleansing for such as I—let me to the river! Let me to the river!”

(Oscar catches her as she almost falls.)

OSCAR. Cover that dress! Cover that dress, I say! What do you know of Paris? You shall not wear the dress of Paris! Cover it, I say, with the honest dress of a good German wife! (*He aids her to slip on over her gay French gown, the simple gown of a German girl of the middle class.*) There! Gott sei dank! You are of that evil life no longer!

GALATEA. Nay, now I am of another land. It is home that folds me in—it is almost time for the goodman to be here for the supper! (*She makes as if setting a table, and feeding a fire.*) How quietly the little one sleeps! (*She bends over an imaginary cradle, very gently lifting an imaginary baby in her arms.*) Sleep, Kindlein! Ah, sleep! The child's home is the mother's breast! Sleep! (*She rocks the imaginary baby to and fro, crooning to it. Then she lays it back in the cradle.*) Lieber Himmel! It is his step! He is here! (*She rushes to Oscar, catching him in her arms.*) Welcome! It is thou! Thou art at home!

OSCAR. Ay, indeed I am at home! Nay, thou shalt not leave my arms! 'Twas I kissed thee awake! Thou art mine—and no other shall make my home—only thou! Only thou!

GALATEA. Ay, it was thou kissed me awake,—and when thou kissest me no more, then let me sleep indeed!

(CURTAIN.)

Appendix

NOTES ON THE PLAYS.

It may be that those who hereafter take part in the plays included in the present volume, will find it of interest to know by whom the plays were originally produced: and what players have heretofore interpreted their characters. Hence the notes appended.

PO' WHITE TRASH

Was first produced by Henry Woodruff,—for whom the part of “Drent Dury” was written,—at the Bijou Theatre, Boston, at a special matinee, given on March 25, 1897. On this occasion, Mr. Woodruff appeared as “DRENT”; Miss Minnie Dupree as “CAROL”; Miss Maud Hosford as “SUKK”; Mr. Eugene Ormonde as “JUDGE PAGE”; Mr. Joseph Brennen as “DR. PAYNE”; Mr. William B. Smith as “ZEP”; Miss Rachel Noah as “SAL”; and Miss Mabel Dixey as “MILLY.”

The play was again given by Mr. Woodruff, at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, on April 22, 1898. Mr. Woodruff again appeared as "DRENT" and Miss Hosford as "SUKÉ"; the "SAL" was Miss Ina Hammer; the "CAROL," Miss Jessie Mackaye; the "DR. PAYNE," Mr. Eugene Jepson; the "JUDGE PAGE," Mr. Geo. Fullerton; the "MILLY," Miss Helen Lowell; the "ZEP," Mr. John Bunny.

The play was used professionally by Mr. Daniel Frawley, on his Western tour of the season of 1898-99. "DRENT" was then played by Mr. Alfred Hickman.

IN FAR BOHEMIA

Was first produced at a benefit performance, at the Bijou Theatre, Boston, on the evening of January 18, 1898. On this occasion, "KAREN" was played by Miss Minnie Dupree; "ALEC" by Mr. Horace Lewis; and "MRS. PENNYPACKER" by Miss Kate Ryan.

A COMEDIE ROYALL

Was first produced at the Bijou Theatre, Boston, by Mr. Henry Woodruff, on March 25, 1897. Mr. Woodruff appeared as "ROYALL HARTWYND"; Mr. Eugene Ormonde as "SIR JOHN HARTWYND"; Miss Maude Banks as "QUEEN ELIZABETH"; Miss Minnie Dupree as "PHYLLIDA"; Mr. Ira Hards as "LORD

FARTHORNE''; and Mr. William B. Smith as ''SIR EDWARD AVIS.''

Mr. Woodruff produced the play later, at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, on April 22, 1898. On this occasion he again appeared as ''ROYALL''; Miss Mary Shaw was the ''QUEEN''; and Miss Mary Young, the ''PHYLLIDA.''

AT THE BARRICADE

Was originally produced at a benefit performance, at the Hollis Street Theatre, on April 28, 1898. Mr. William Farnum was the ''LAURENT''; Mrs. Emma Sheridan-Fry, the ''YVONNE''; Miss Carrie Keeler the ''CLAIRE.''

The play was later presented by Mr. Franklin Sargent, at a Pupils' Matinee of the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, December 14, 1899.

A BIT OF INSTRUCTION

Was first produced by Mr. Henry Woodruff, at a special performance at Brattee Hall, Cambridge, on February 25, 1898. On this occasion, Mr. Woodruff appeared as ''DESPARD''; and Mr. Harry Gay as ''NEWBURY.''

The play was given by Mr. Woodruff, at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, on April 22, 1898.

Mr. Woodruff then played "NEWBURY," and Mr. Robert Edeson was the "DESPARD."

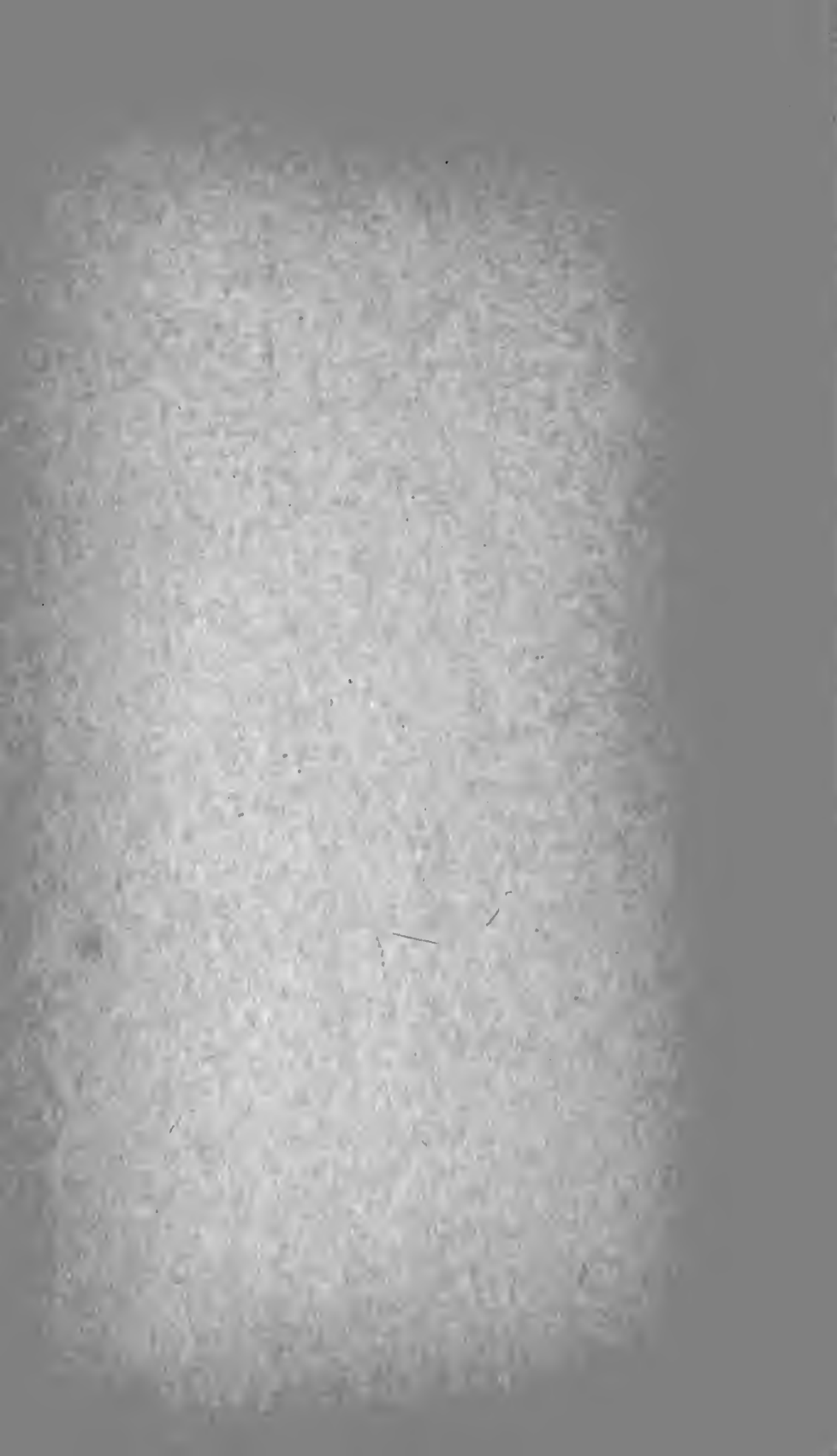
The play was used by Mr. Woodruff professionally for an extended vaudeville tour, in the autumn of 1898.

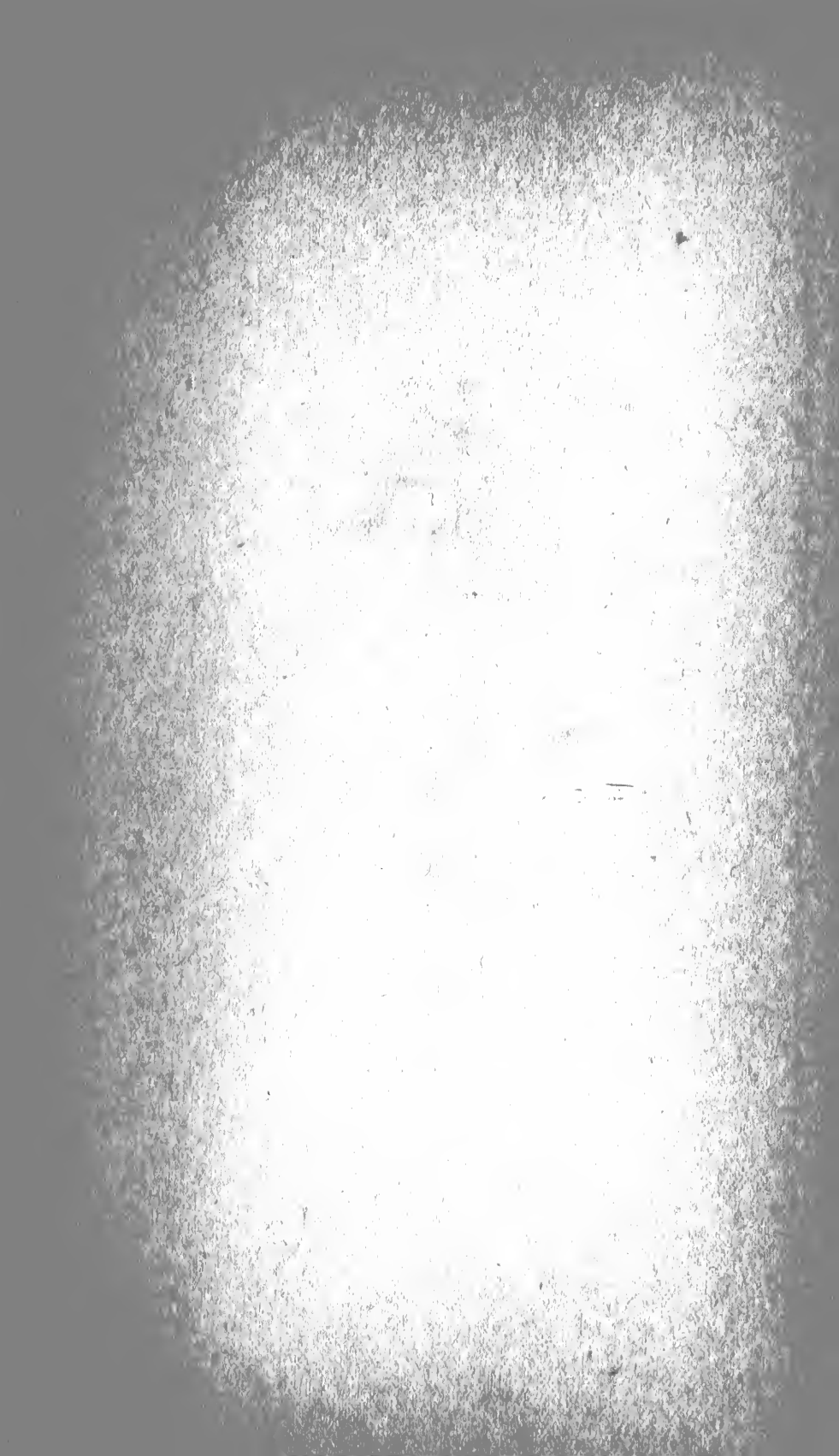
ROHAN THE SILENT

Was written for the late Alexander Salvini; and was accepted by him to be used in connection with "The Fool's Revenge"; which it was his intention to include in his repertoire, in his season of 1896-97. It was produced by him at the Tremont Theatre, Boston, May 28, 1896. It is notable that "ROHAN" was the last rôle ever created by Mr. Salvini. The cast on this occasion was a memorable one: including Mr. Salvini as "ROHAN"; Miss Ida Conquest as "ISOBEL"; Mr. Eugene Ormonde as "SIR PHILIP"; Mr. George Fawcett as "SIR ROBERT"; Mr. Joseph Francoeur as "GODWIN"; Mr. Albert Brünning as "GOBYN"; Mr. Franklyn Roberts as "BEOWULF"; Mr. Eugene Sanger as "GODFREY"; Mr. Wright Kramer as "JOHN"; and Miss Rachel Noah as the "NURSE."

"A Song at the Castle," "Galatea of the Toy-Shop," and "The End of the Way," have not yet had production.

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